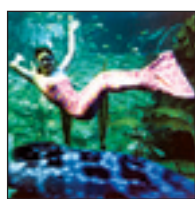


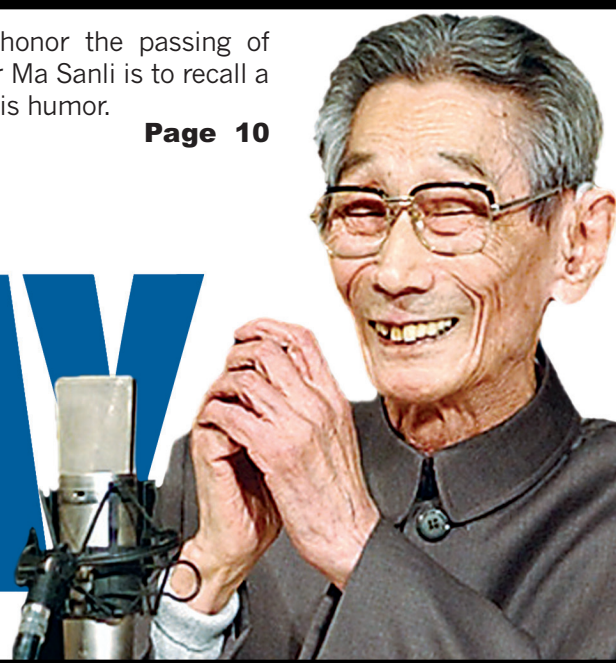
There is nothing quite like dunking yourself in a steaming mineral spring as a means of casting out the winter demons. **Page 16**



Tender delicacies and romantic performances await the hungry and amorous. **Page 14**



The best way to honor the passing of crosstalk godfather Ma Sanli is to recall a few fragments of his humor. **Page 10**



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Whose Work Is It?

Academician ensnared in plagiarism scandal

By Xiao Rong

A member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and president of Nanjing's Southeast University has been named in a new plagiarism scandal that is sending shockwaves through Chinese academia.

The plagiarism accusation, against Gu Guanqun, first appeared in an anonymous article published on January 8 in *New Thread*, a domestic website with a reputation for exposing academic corruption.

The article claims that a dissertation co-authored by Gu Guanqun and Li Shifeng, published in the 2002 June issue of *Modern Cable Transmission*, plagiarizes a conference paper by Bell Laboratories. The dissertation purports to be sponsored by a National Natural Science Foundation project, of which Gu is in charge.

Southeast University responded to the claim the following day, saying that Li Shifeng, a doctoral student of Gu, should assume sole responsibility, as the dissertation had been written by him and published without Gu's permission.

Li Shifeng then published an open apology in *New Thread*, admitting to the plagiarism charge and accepted all responsibility.

The story does not end there, however. On January 10, two more articles released in *New Thread* revealed that another two dissertations, also co-authored by Li Shifeng and Gu Guanqun were plagiarized.

Then came the revelation by *New Thread* that a fourth dissertation published in last year's English version of the Journal of Southeast University, co-authored by Shen Jun and Gu Guanqun, was based mainly on two previous dissertations by Shen Jun and Qian Zhengchao.

Shen and Qian are both professors in the Computer Science department at Southeast University. Shen is a former doctoral student of Gu.

In the face of this avalanche of plagiarism accusations, Gu has chosen to keep silent. *Beijing Today* managed to contact Feng Jianming, Gu's secretary, and requested an interview with Gu.

"Professor Gu is really a victim of this event, which has aroused such attention in academic circles because of his fame. He has said he may resort to legal action to counter these damaging claims," said Feng, who agreed to pass on *Beijing Today's* request for an interview to Gu and university authorities. However no answer had been received at press time.

Prior to the winter vacation, Zuo Wei, vice president of Southeast University admitted to *Southern Weekend* on January 22 that the three dissertations named by *New Thread* were plagiarized, but maintained that the fault lay solely with Li Shifeng.

As to Shen Jun's dissertation, also bylined with Gu's name, Zuo said Gu Guanqun knew of Shen's idea to compile the paper on

the basis of the original two papers.

When asked how it could be proven that Gu Guanqun was not aware of Li Shifeng's misappropriating his name, as doctoral students who want to apply for reimbursement of the cost of publishing papers must have the signature of their tutor, Zuo Wei refused to make public the relevant expense account.

Beijing Today contacted Shen Jun and asked him whether Gu Guanqun knew that the dissertation was based on two earlier papers, however Shen refused to comment, saying only that he had told everything to the Computer Science department, "You can ask our department," he said.

Beijing Today was unable to contact any heads of the Computer Science department, but did succeed in interviewing by telephone several professors at the department.

"This is an inevitable case which can be mainly attributed to the retrogression of the spirit of dedication of our students under the utilitarian influence of society, as the exposure of several similar academic scandals reveals," said Professor Xing Hancheng.

He expressed surprise at Li Shifeng's choice of publishing the three dissertations in such obscure periodicals.

"I have never heard of the magazines. Even if Li declared the published papers to be his fruit, our academic committee would not admit them," Xing added.

The requirement of publishing a certain number of dissertations is necessary to guarantee academic innovation among doctoral students, said Ding Wei, another professor at the department. But she added that the pressure on doctoral students at Southeast University to publish is intense.

"I think it takes time for our university to improve our academic system for stricter cultivation of academic talents," she said. "Since this happened, a new stipulation was made demanding all dissertations to be published by a doctoral student be approved by the tutor."

Wu Guoxin, a professor in the same department, also agreed that the incident will help improve awareness of tutors to strengthen supervision of doctoral students' papers.

Both Wu and Xing held the view that Gu Guanqun is still to blame, regardless of whether he was unaware of the publishing of the plagiarized dissertations.

One possibility, Xing said, may be that Gu signed the expense account and knew about Li's papers, but did not read them, or at least, did not read them carefully.

"After all the papers will not be published on core academic periodicals, so Gu maybe didn't take it so seriously when his name was bylined by his student," he added. "This is understandable among tutors, but the problem is that once your name is connected with the paper, you should be responsible for it."

Xing Hancheng and Wu Guoxin in both have two or three doctoral students, but they told *Beijing Today* that Gu Guanqun is now instructing over 10.

On the website of Southeast University, *Beijing Today* found an address made by Gu Guanqun at a conference on September 2002, which reads, "All tutors must strengthen supervision of the quality of dissertations written by their doctoral students. Those tutors who read papers carelessly or don't even look at them because they are busy instructing too many graduate students should be censured."

The address also emphasizes that in cases of plagiarism, both students and tutors should be punished.

To date, Southeast University has not penalized Gu Guanqun or Li Shifeng. The National Natural Science Foundation under the State Council, however, confirmed to *Beijing Today* that they are now investigating the case.

Beijing Today then called the Chinese Academy of Engineering. "It's the first time that one of our academicians has been accused of plagiarizing since our founding in 1994. We are following the course of the university's investigation closely," said a press official from the academy, who declined to be named.

China Beats Brazil



Ronaldo attempts to cut past Chinese defender Li Weifeng at Guangzhou Olympic Stadium Wednesday. Xinhua Photo

By Hou Mingxin

World champions Brazil were held to a 0-0 draw by China Wednesday in an exhibition match in Guangzhou. Almost all Brazil's World Cup heroes, including Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho, Roberto Carlos and Cafu, played in the match.

The match was the first meeting

between the two teams since last summer's World Cup, when Brazil defeated China 4-0. But on Wednesday, the World Cup champions were unable to find the same spark of inspiration, and failed to break through the tight Chinese defense.

Manchester City defender Sun Jihai was outstanding in left midfield, and together with Everton midfielder

er Li Tie, ensured the world champions saw little of China's goal.

The result was a major morale boost for new coach, Dutchman Arie Haan, who in December took over the helm of the Chinese national team from Bora Milutinovic, and of whom fans have increasingly high expectations after last year's World Cup debut.

Red Card for Corrupt Ref

By Hou Mingxin

Soccer referee Gong Jianping has received a 10-year jail term after being convicted of taking bribes during the 2000-2001 Chinese Football League season.

The verdict, delivered by the Xuanwu District People's Court on January 29, marked the conclusion of the first trial in the case that first came to light in October 2001. The court found that Gong accepted nine bribes, totaling 370,000 yuan, or US \$47,000, between 2000 and 2001 from several first and two second division clubs.

"Gong appeared rather composed, he admitted most of the charges and no witnesses gave testimony during the trial," according to a report in *Beijing Times*.

The verdict also brought an end to speculation about how the case would be handled following Gong's arrest by the Beijing Xuanwu District Public Security Bureau in April 2002.

Analysts say the case will set an example for other judicial bodies, allowing them to investigate other referees suspected of corruption.

Gong was first named by Lücheng Football Club president Song Weiping in October 2001, as one of eight referees who had accepted bribes during the 2000-2001 season.

Geely chairman Li Shufu, who is also president of Guangzhou Geely football club, and Song Weiping, admitted publicly last year that they had bribed referees to win matches and expected to be punished.

Both Song and Li said they had paid 60,000 yuan to ensure home victories. Li further claimed that 70 to 80 percent of league referees had taken bribes at least once.

The case has aroused widespread anger among fans and condemnation from the media. The Chinese Football Association (CFA), Gong's employer, stated shortly after the story broke that referees who admitted taking bribes should be forgiven. Only those who refuse to confess should be penalized.

In December 2001, an anonymous letter from a referee in which he confessed to taking bribes, was published in national media. It later turned out that Gong was the author of the letter, and that he had re-

turned part of the bribe money.

In March 2002, the Supreme People's Procuratorate issued a notice declaring that referees suspected of taking bribes would be prosecuted under charges of accepting bribes as an employee of a corporation, according to Article 163 of the Criminal Law. Those found guilty of such charges would be sentenced to a fixed-term of imprisonment.

However with the exception of Gong, other referees accused of corruption appear to have been exonerated by the CFA, some even umpired matches during the 2002 league season.

Meanwhile two days after Gong was sentenced, six football clubs and six individuals received penalties from the CFA.

The six clubs received fines ranging from 300,000 to 800,000. The general managers of the six clubs also received severe warnings.

Six individuals who delivered bribes to the referees on behalf of the soccer clubs were fined 100,000 yuan each and banned from taking soccer-related jobs in China for life.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: LI SHI

State to Tighten Air Beverage Security

By Hou Mingxin
The General Administration of Civil Aviation of China issued a circular on February 5 calling for the tightening of controls related to beverages carried on-board airplanes by passengers.

According to the notice, each passenger is now limited to two bottles of

soft drinks such as mineral water, milk, tea, or juice when boarding an aircraft. Each bottle can be no larger than 500 milliliters.

All bottled drinks also have to be opened for inspection before boarding.

Alcohol is no longer allowed to be carried on-board aircraft. Passengers transporting alcohol by plane are limited

to two bottles no larger than 500 milliliters each, which must be packed into check-in baggage.

Moreover, liquid medicine and baby drink cannot be carried on planes unless first made open for inspection. Passengers that do not wish to undergo such checks may stow the liquids in their check-in luggage, on the condition that

they are packed well and will not leak.

In a move reminiscent of imperial precautions, starting February 2, passengers at Capital International Airport in Beijing are required to take a sip from any bottled drinks they are carrying while passing through initial security check-in points, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

City Revises Regulation on Law Offices

The revised Management Regulations on Law Offices went into effect in Beijing on February 1, with the intention of stimulating the city's legal industry.

According to the municipal judicial department, former requirements that partnership law offices be located in office buildings and occupy at least 80 square meters of floor space have been scrapped.

The more relaxed new regulations simply state, "premises' working conditions must be able to ensure the normal operation of law offices".

They also include articles related to the application qualifications of lawyers registered elsewhere that intend to start practice in the capital. Moreover, the regulations clarify rules on the management procedures and working efficiency of judicial departments.

According to the Beijing Bar Association, there are 550 law offices currently operating in Beijing, 539, or 98 percent, of which are partnership offices. The city is home to 7,191 registered and assistant lawyers, accounting for six percent of all lawyers nationwide. (Xinhua)

Construction of Tallest Tower Resumes

By Ema Ma
After five years of stagnation, construction of the Shanghai World Financial Center resumed on Thursday in the Lujiazui Finance & Trade Zone, Pudong.

The super high-rise, expected to be the world's tallest building, will be located next to the world's current third highest structure, Jinmao Mansion. Construction of the massive tower is planned to be completed in four years.

According to the primary investor in the project, Japan's Forest Overseas, the 75 billion-yen plan was approved by the Shanghai government in 1997. Altogether 36 Japanese investors are involved, including banks, insurance and other companies, and a Japanese government-sponsored institution, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund.

The original blueprints called for a 94-story building

that would be 460 meters tall and have a total area of 335,420 square meters. However, shortly after the foundation was laid in 1998, work was suspended due to a shortage of funds in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis.

In the five years since, the building's shot at the tallest title has been challenged by the start of construction of structures in Taipei and Hong Kong that will tower over 480 meters into the air.

Therefore, to make sure the building earns the highest distinction, current plans have expanded the building to 101 stories and a total height of 492 meters, with a total area of 377,300 square meters.

With the completion of three skyscrapers, including this one, in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Asia will become home to eight of the world's 10 tallest buildings, seven of which will be in China.

Putting a Name On Maglev

By Ema Ma
The right to name the Shanghai Transrapid Maglev Line will be auctioned worldwide on March 5. The event will take place at the Longyanglu Station, and 8 million yuan has been set as the starting price.

In addition to holding the right to name the magnetic levitation train, or maglev, for two years, the winner of the bidding will also enjoy favorable treatment during that time including free advertising on car seats and tickets and priority to purchase 20 tickets 24 hours before

departure, according to many reports in Shanghai's local media.

The organizer of the auction, Shanghai Transrapid Maglev Line Transportation Development, hopes that the winning name will boost the maglev's hi-tech image.

The line is the world's first and only high-speed commercial maglev system. Successful trials were conducted at the end of last year, and the train, which connects Pudong Airport with Shanghai's subway line, is expected to carry seven million passengers in two years.



Photo by Xinhua



Photo by Xinhua

Face Lift For Gate of Heavenly Peace

By Ema Ma
Tian'anmen Gate, one of the capital's major landmarks, closed to sightseers last Saturday to undergo its fourth series of repairs since 1949. The famed entryway to the Forbidden City will reopen to the public in early May.

Tian'anmen was first built in 1417 as the main entrance

to the Purple Imperial Palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties. It underwent significant repairs after being heavily damaged by the incursion of the eight allied imperialist forces in Beijing in 1900.

The structure emerged as a national icon on October 1, 1949, when it was the site

of the announcement of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

"In addition to maintenance of the drainage and reinforcing systems, the whole building will get a new coat of paint," according to an announcement put out by the Tian'anmen Area Commission.

Foreign Exchange Gets Longer Day

By Ema Ma
As of last Saturday, the trading time of the inter-bank foreign exchange market has been extended from the original 9:30 to 11am to 9:30am to 3:30pm, with no break at noon, according to an announcement posted on the official website of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE).

"Extending business hours will help dealers to eliminate inherent risks in foreign exchange," said an official from SAFE who requested anonymity.

"There was no way to trade open position, that is, imbalances in outstanding foreign currency assets and liabilities, under the original half-day plan. Control of exposure risk for such open position has long been a hard problem for banks."

That official added that extending the trading day will open more opportunities and raise the level of activity in the slack market.

A professor from East China Normal University who also

requested anonymity described the move as "a concrete step forward in the improvement of China's foreign exchange market." He continued, though, that there is a lot that needs to be done in the relatively closed market, such as increasing membership, developing other trading products and expanding the ranks of tradable currencies.

At present, only the US dollar, Japanese yen, Euro and HK dollar can be traded in the market.

Banks Allowed to Open Direct Cross-Straits Remittance Links

By Hou Mingxin
According to a report published in *Beijing Youth Daily* on February 9, financial authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Straits have given permission to banks to open direct remittance links, and the Renminbi is expected to be accepted as a convertible currency in Taiwan in the near future.

"This is a welcome move, as the cross-Straits flow of funds has become heavy," said Qin Chijiang, deputy secretary-general of the China Society of Finance. "Investors from Taiwan will be the biggest beneficiaries of this opening."

Taiwanese investors have poured US\$61 billion of investment into more than 54,000 businesses on the mainland. All, however, previously had to make remittances and settle accounts through third parties, mostly banks in Hong Kong or the United States, due to political barriers.

Although the People's Bank of China has not yet to officially announce the decision, mainland banks are already racing to expand their lists of partners in Taiwan.

Since last July, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), the mainland's biggest commercial bank, has signed agreements with 22 banks from Taiwan and 12 foreign banks operating on the island to be its correspondent banks, enabling ICBC to handle remittances, letters of credit and settlements across the Straits.

"The route for business exchange has been straightened," said a spokesman for the ICBC who requested anonymity, "and we are now able to provide better services to our clients." The shortened routes will save bank clients an average of US\$15-25 per remittance, and the entire process will be shortened by nearly one half to within one day, he added.

According to the *Beijing Youth Daily* story, "It is technically possible at present for Taiwanese banks to trade Renminbi, but in order to set up such a link, the island would have to first reach a clearing agreement with the People's Bank of China to establish an account-settling mechanism between the yuan and Taiwanese dollar."

Pakistan Gives Ok to Renminbi

By Zhao Hongyi
China's currency is going international. Earlier this month, Ishrat Hussain, governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the country's central bank, announced his bank plans to begin accepting Renminbi for conversion into Pakistani Rupees.

This new policy would effectively mean that Pakistani businessmen could be paid in Renminbi for trade conducted with Chinese interests. This week, the Renminbi exchanged at 1:7.25469 rupees, according to the bank.

The Chinese media has reported this to be the first time a foreign country's central bank has approved the Renminbi for exchange for native currency.

"This is indeed a first," said Zhou Xiaokang, commercial official of the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

In several other countries and areas that border the Chinese mainland, such as Hong Kong, Macao, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, the Renminbi has already been used in cross-border transactions. "But those have all been cases of market acceptance, not government approval," Zhou said.

Jin Bosheng, an analyst from the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, explained, "Basically, this is a practical step we have to take. The two countries have increasingly closer economic and commercial relations, and Pakistan has a huge trade deficit with China."

According to China's General Customs Administration, in the first ten months of last year, China's exports to Pakistan reached a total value of \$1.01 billion, while imports amounted to \$464.8 million.

Despite the increasing recognition of the Renminbi in bordering countries and regions, the Chinese government seems cautious about introducing a policy of full convertibility of its currency.

Private Company Wins Airport Purchase Approval

By Shan Jinliang

Junyao Group will soon become the first private company in China to own an airport, following approval by China's civil air authorities of a request by Hubei Province to let the company run Sanxia (Three Georges) Airport.

The Civil Air Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) Monday confirmed the news to *Beijing Today*. However a spokesperson for the airport said they had not received notice from the government and refused



Wang Junyao, founder of Junyao Group

Photo by Dong Xin

to comment.

Junyao public relations officer Zou Jianjun told *Beijing Today* that the purchase of Sanxia Airport marks the company's entry into the core business of the civil air industry, following it taking an 18 percent stake in Wuhan Airlines last August. Junyao Group became the first private company to run contracted flights.

The purchase price has been set at 400 million yuan, but the entire cost including reconstruction could add up to much more than that, added Zou. Located at Yichang, Hubei Province, the airport was built in 1994 to serve the Three Georges Project. With a designed annual throughput of 1.4 million passengers, the airport handled only 300,000 passengers last year, but *China Business Times* Tuesday predicted that the Three

Georges Project would have a growing impact on freight and passenger transport.

Junyao confirmed the direct link between the purchase of the airport and the tourism development in the area. "We are really focused on the local tourism resources potential in the Three Georges-Shengnongjia Area," said Zou, "and a series of recent civil air investment represent our preparation for tourism, and we have also established a preliminary group for a travel company in the area."

Group president Wang Junjin said the group's travel agencies and hotels will help beef up the civil air business of Junyao, and once the civil air industry shifts from outside service to a core business operation in the industry, it will promote the development of other industries, such as dairy and real estate.



KFC launches its new Beijing Chicken Roll to the accompaniment of Peking Opera. The roll, which KFC describes as having a "traditional Beijing flavor", is the chain's weapon in the increasingly fierce fast food war. (Xinhua Photo)

New Era for White Swan Hotel

By Xiao Rong

The pending management adjustment of China's first joint-venture five-star hotel has attracted widespread attention since ownership of the hotel reverted to the Guangdong provincial government earlier this month.

The White Swan Hotel, which opened in Guangzhou in 1983 under joint cooperation between the Guangdong Tourism Bureau and Hong Kong-based Weichang Development, was the first five-star hotel in China to attract foreign capital. The contract between the two sides expired on February 6.

Fok Yingtung, president of Hong Kong Weichang and also vice chairman of the board of directors of the hotel, expressed his desire to continue management of the hotel.

"The Guangdong government has expressed the hope that our company will either merge with, or lease the hotel. The latter way would probably be our choice, considering the difficulty of assessing the real value of the White Swan brand," said Fok last Sunday at a banquet celebrating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the hotel.

Fok also revealed at the banquet that a new management company based on the hotel's original management team would be founded. The company is required by local government to earn a net profit of 30 million yuan, of which 75 percent goes to the provincial government and 25 percent belongs to itself.

Further details regarding the co-operation and how long the lease period will be are yet to be determined, he added.

China Banks Eye World Bullion Market

By Ema Ma

The Bank of China (BOC) is negotiating with Mocatta and Goldsmid, Britain's largest bullion dealers, to import gold for trading in China.

BOC is the first Chinese bank to gain approval to purchase bullion on the world market. Although a number of domestic papers have carried the story recently, BOC has declined to divulge any details.

After a period of mild growth since China's bullion market was established at the end of last October, gold prices soared in the past two weeks, reaching 5-6 dollars higher than the international price per ounce in the week before the Chinese Lunar New Year.

"Higher-than-expected prices are a sign of disequilibrium in the domestic market," Xi Jianhua, an analyst at the BOC Shanghai Branch told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday. "Since the gold content is standard worldwide, the price should be even in all markets, discounting local supply and demand fluctuations. International gold prices have reached a six year high

of \$380-390 per ounce, amid fears of an imminent war between the US and Iraq.

"In addition, latent instability is also responsible for the price surge," Xi added. "The withdrawal of the central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBOC), as the only authorized gold importer when the gold market was set up, has left a vacuum which is yet to be filled. Shortages of tradable commodities not only lead to higher prices, but also make the market slack."

The BOC has an advantage in this regard, Xi says. "Rich experiences have been accumulated when we acted as the sole agent of PBOC to purchase in the world market before. We are also the most active (of the four main banks) in the domestic market, accounting for 30 percent of the daily turnover."

"The sales on consignment are just a temporary solution," said Yin Po, deputy manager of Shanghai Bullion Exchange. "When the domestic market becomes more resilient, foreign dealers will be permitted to trade as freely as their local peers."

Shares Sell-off Sparks Web Portal Doubts

By Shan Jinliang

In the past two weeks, senior managers of both Sohu and Sina, Chinese web portals listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange, sold off large quantities of their shares. Their actions have triggered doubts in China about the future performance of the websites.

According to Nasdaq reports, Sohu chairman and CEO Charles Zhang sold 44,000 Sohu shares on January 28, for US \$366,564. Two days later, Sina's three top managers, chief financial officer Cao Guowei, executive president Lin Xinhe, and president Wang Yan sold 182,000 shares, for a total of \$1.4 million.

An anonymous informant from Netease, also listed on the Nasdaq, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that Netease president Ted Sun also sold an unknown number of shares before the Spring Festival, but this was later denied by the company's PR department.

The actions have raised questions in local media about why the top management of these portals chose



Wang Yan



Charles Zhang

to sell their shares soon after announcing their first-ever profits earnings last month.

The companies themselves voiced the same explanation: the exciting financial reports helped the websites escape from junk status of under one dollar share valuation, and it is natural for the managers to sell shares for profits just before the festival. A PR spokesperson from Netease told *Beijing Today* that a large quantity of shares had been distributed to senior managers over the past two years when the web portals were losing value on the Nasdaq, and that there was nothing strange about them taking this opportunity to sell those shares for profit.

Liu Ren, an IT analyst from China Byte also said there was nothing unusual about the transactions, attributing the media attention to a lack of understanding of the stock market. He pointed out recent share sales by Microsoft's Bill Gates and Time Warner's Ted Turner, which aroused little attention. (Photos by Photocom)

Canon Denies Business Shift to Japan

By Shan Jinliang

Canon China on Wednesday denied a report by *Dow Jones Newswire* Monday that the Japanese camera and office equipment maker will develop an automatic production system that will see the withdrawal of that part of its China business back to Japan.

The report said the system will produce office facilities and materials and other basic products such as color printer toners at a lower cost than those currently made in China.

Canon China's Advertising and Publicity Department told *Beijing Today* that the company is considering a research on automatic production systems, but all the rest details are still undecided.

The department also said Canon's business has been growing rapidly recently in China. She added that the overall number of Canon China employees will climb from the current around 250 to 1,000 in 2004.

Huawei Recalls Patent Challenge Products

By Xiao Rong

Facing a patent infringement suit from Cisco Systems, China's leading telecom equipment maker, Huawei Technologies, confirmed last Saturday it is recalling its Quidway branded routers and switches sold in the US market.

Cisco filed a lawsuit at a US district court in Texas on January 24, accusing Huawei and its two American subsidiaries of copying Cisco's intellectual property, as reported in *Beijing Today* on January 31.

A Huawei spokesperson said that the recall would not have an adverse effect on the company, as very few Quidway products had been sold in the US. He added that Huawei would focus on developing other new products not tainted with patent infringement suspicions.

"Long before Cisco filed the suit, we had actually taken measures to make remedies. What we are doing now can also be deemed as kind and constructive means of solving the issue," said a spokesman from the company's Shenzhen headquarters.

Meanwhile Cisco claimed in files submitted to the court last Tuesday that Huawei was attempting to prevent further judgment of the case by eliminating evidence of its copyright infringement.

Haier Poised to Become Top Home Appliance Chipmaker

By Shan Jinliang

Haier Group, China's top home appliance maker, signed an agreement recently on building a wafer factory in Qingdao with Thailand's Chia Tai (China) Investment. Local media are reporting that the deal will make Haier the leading home appliance chip maker.

Haier told *Beijing Youth Daily* Monday there had been meetings between the two companies, but declined to give further details. According to a report in the *21st Century Economic Herald*, Haier will invest 40 percent of the US \$270 million project in the form of land, equipment and capital, while Chia Tai will invest the remaining 60 percent.

The joint venture will design and produce integrated circuits based on existing eight-inch crystal chip designs.

Numerous IT and home appliance companies, such as Haier, Hisense, Langchao, Aucma and Xiaoya currently import chips, while wafer production in Taiwan, the world's leading wafer production center, is in a slump, with record-low profits. Meanwhile the Chinese government is encouraging the development of the integrated circuits industry, with low tax and venture capital support.

In June 2000, Haier established the Beijing Haier Integrated Circuit Design Corporation at Beijing Zhongguancun Science Park. The project in Qingdao is an extension of the wafer industry chain from design to production.

Atofina Acquires Guangdong Polystyrene Plant

By Xu Xiaona

Atofina, the chemicals branch of Total Fina Elf, signed an agreement with China Offshore Oil Sanshui Chemicals last month on the acquisition of its polystyrene plant.

The plant is located at Sanshui, Guangdong Province. According to Arnaud d'Aramon, Atofina Styrenics vice-president, the acquisition will enable Atofina to strengthen its polystyrene business in Asia. The company already operates a polystyrene plant in Singapore, and two compounding plants, in Thailand and in Singapore. Arnaud said the new facility would allow Atofina to expand sales to its customers in China.

Total Fina Elf has been present in China for over 30 years, particularly through its chemicals branch. For Atofina, the acquisition secures an opportunity to gain a foothold in China's petrochemical sector.

Atofina is the world's third largest polystyrene producer, with a total capacity of 1.4 million tons, and the fourth largest styrene producer, with a total capacity of 1.2 million tons.

Polystyrene is a plastic used in various applications, including electronic consumer market, packaging and toy manufacturing.

Greenspan Cautions Congress on Deficits

Washington, February 12 (AP) - Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan dealt a blow Tuesday to President Bush's drive for new tax cuts, saying he did not believe the economy needed further stimulus and warning Congress to be "very careful" to keep budget deficits from exploding.

Greenspan, who two years ago lent critical support to Bush's first round of \$1.35 trillion in tax cuts, threw cold water on the new \$1.3 trillion package. Bush is seeking \$670 billion in accelerated tax cuts and elimination of taxes on stock dividends as part of a stimulus program.

However, Greenspan said that given the worsening deficit picture, the Bush proposal to eliminate taxes on dividends paid to investors should be paid for either by raising other taxes or cutting government spending.

Democrats, who have attacked Bush's tax-cut proposals as too expensive and too tilted toward the wealthy, quickly praised Greenspan's comments.

(Martin Crutsinger)

Economists Blast Bush Tax-Cut Proposal

Washington, February 10 (Reuters) - Economists led by 10 Nobel laureates on Monday attacked President Bush's \$695 million tax-cut proposal, arguing that the cuts fail to address the problems facing the US economy and will add to long-term budget deficits.

Their signed statement took up a full-page in the New York Times, saying economic growth that is not sufficient to generate jobs as well as corporate scandals, business overcapacity and uncertainty continue to weigh on the US economy.

Democrats Attack Bush Budget for Deficit

Washington, February 4 (AP) - President Bush's \$2.23 trillion budget for 2004 and its call for new tax cuts was criticized by Democrats on Capitol Hill.

The plan also projects deficits of \$307 billion this year and \$304 billion next year - surpassing the record \$290 billion deficit of 1992 under the first President Bush.

Less than two years after Bush pro-

jected \$5.6 trillion in surpluses for the next decade, on Monday he estimated \$1.08 trillion in cumulative deficits for the coming five years alone.

(Martin Crutsinger)

Analysts' Take:

The Americans Debate, But Don't Worry About Their Deficit

Chen Baoshen

Most of the US budget deficit went on state bonds purchased by individual investors, corporate investors and governments of other countries. Its external trade deficit was remedied by the huge investment revenues brought back by the hundreds of thousands of US companies active around the world.

Therefore, the Americans, at least the Republicans, are not worried about their deficits, both the budget deficit (at \$300-plus billion over the next few years) and external trade deficit (close to \$400 billion this year), because they believe that the figures are still moderate given the total GDP of the US.

In 1985, the US Congress stipulated

a federal budget deficit ceiling of 5 percent of GDP. Even at \$300 billion-plus, Bush's budget deficit is comfortably within that limit.

But some critical points lie in the tax cut proposal.

First, Bush's tax reduction plans and budget deficit initiatives are all based on the budget surplus estimated by the Clinton administration, which was supposed to be used for the country's medical welfare. Bush therefore seems to be dismissing the hope of individual Americans for a better medical welfare system.

Bush is now requiring a rise of the ceiling above five percent of GDP from Congress, which the Democrats are strongly against.

The US federal government's public debt has reached more than \$3 trillion. The figure is moderate compared with its GDP but is enormous by itself. The payment for the bonds and interests is a regular cost to the federal government, which is also increasing year by year.

(Mr. Chen is a senior researcher of the US economy in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)

BP Enters Russia's Oil Industry With \$6.75 Billion

London, February 12 (Dow Jones Newswire) - British Petroleum is to offer \$6.75 billion in cash and stock to create the third-largest oil company in Russia with two local partners.

BP will become a 50% partner in the venture, temporarily called NewCo, with Russia's Alfa Group and Access-Renova. For its stake, BP will pay \$3 billion in cash and later transfer three installments of stock worth \$1.25 billion each. The shares would give the Russian partners a stake of about 2.34% in BP, officials said.

Ericsson Replaces CEO

Stockholm, Sweden, February 7 (AP) - Kurt Hellstroem, who has been with Ericsson for 18 years - the last four as its president and CEO - said he wanted to take advantage of a clause in his contract that would let him retire when he turned 60 this year.

The Stockholm-based company named Carl-Henric Svanberg to its top position. He will take over on April 8, when Ericsson holds its annual shareholder meeting.

Svanberg has been CEO of Assa Abloy since 1994 and has been lauded for turning Assa Abloy into one of the world's best known lock makers.

(Matt Moore)



Carl-Henric Svanberg
Reuters Photo

GE and Coke Bow On Executive Pay

New York, February 11 (Financial Times) - General Electric and Coca-Cola have agreed to phase out certain generous salary and pension benefits for top executives.

Leading US companies are taking shareholder concerns on executive compensation more seriously, as the season of annual meetings approaches. But shareholder activists believe big US companies should go further and intend to use the meetings to press for wide-ranging corporate governance reform. Annual meetings could be particularly stormy at some companies this year.

(Andrew Hill)

Network Risk Insurance Increases

Los Angeles, February 12 (Edittech International) - Insurance companies are forcing businesses to buy additional policies for "network risk insurance," which costs about \$5,000 to 30,000 a year for \$1 million in coverage.

Losses from computer crime are expected to soar 25 percent to \$2.8 billion in the US this year and website attacks nearly doubled to 600 a day last year.

As a result, hacker insurance is becoming a necessity and the market will grow from 100 million dollars today to 900 million dollars by 2005, according to market research company Gartner.



A North Korean man selects his mobile phone from a rich selection including TCL, Phillips, Nokia, Bird and Motorola at a downtown shop in Pyongyang. Prices for a handset range from 225 euros to 590 euros.

North Korea has introduced mobile telecommunications services in a number of cities in the country since April last year. The shop in the picture is the only one in the capital. The service is available only to local Koreans while foreigners in the country do not have access to it yet.

Xinhua Photo

Hi, It's Valentine's Day!

A Volkswagen coated with 150 liters of chocolate and topped with cakes is on display in Tokyo, February 12, 2003, ahead of Valentine's Day. Japanese chefs poured chocolate onto the beetle and decorated it with cakes for display at a shopping complex in the Japanese capital.

Xinhua Photo



Coca-Cola to Cut 1,900 Jobs in the US and Germany

Atlanta, January 1 (Dow Jones Business News) - Coca-Cola plans to cut its payroll by about 1,000 people as it restructures its North American operations to combine several units.

The beverage giant announced it would combine its Coca-Cola North America, Coca-Cola Fountain and Minute Maid Company units into a single operation. The new entity would also include its Odwalla fruit juice and Danone Waters operations.

Under the plan, Coke will unify the units' previously separate IT, human resources, sales, marketing, finance, legal and administrative staffs. The company also plans to simplify its procurement and supply chains.

In addition, Coca-Cola said a consolidation of bottling operations in three plants in Germany would likely result in 900 layoffs, and will also be finished in the first quarter.

Media Reports:

After Steve Heyer took office as the new president and CEO last



Douglas Daft
Reuters Photo



'Qibla-Cola' to be launched in the UK in February
AP Photo

December, Coca-Cola started a new round of marketing adjustments, including the launch of new packaging and ending its 60-year relationship with ad agent McCann-Erickson and switching to Berlin Cameron/Red Cell who designed the ad campaign for its new packaging.

Although Coca-Cola was quite successful in 2002, much of its success this year will depend on how it executes new marketing campaigns for its core brands, and promotes new products. The company has been criticized in recent years for not matching PepsiCo's marketing successes.

Most of the job cuts in the US are from headquarters in Atlanta, while in Europe Coca-Cola is facing competition from new colas launched by local producers.

Inspired by the US war on terror, Arabs living in Europe have launched two colas, the Mecca-Cola in France and the Qibla-Cola in Britain, aiming at attracting the continent's Muslim market, which is close to ten million people.

— Beijing Youth Daily

Are Foreign Investors Selling Off Korea?

Seoul, February 8 (www.chosun.com) - The stumble of the Seoul securities market last week has raised concerns, not just because prices hit their lowest in 15 months, but also over foreign investors' net sales. Some experts say it signaled a major change in the overall investment trends of foreigners.

Foreign investors own approximately 36 percent of the total listed shares, but last Friday, shares worth 140 billion won were sold. Foreign held stocks were being dumped throughout the end of January.

Experts said that the reason foreigners were making large-scale sales was because domestic corporations were showing low profits and uncertain prospects. A possible American attack on Iraq, the North Korean nuclear program, and the unpredictable policies of the new Roh Moo-hyun administration were all thought to be strengthening foreign misgivings.

(Lee Ji-hun)

Moody's Downgrades South Korea's Economic Outlook

Seoul, South Korea, February 11 (Dow Jones Newswire) - South Korea's Ministry of Finance and Economy said Tuesday that the only measure it can take in response to Moody's Investors Service downgrade of its rating outlook is to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.

Moody's earlier Tuesday changed the country's long-term ratings outlook to negative from positive A3 for the government's domestic and foreign currency denominated obligations, as well as for the country ceiling on foreign currency bonds and bank deposits of other entities within its borders.

(Sue Chang)

Analysts' Take:

No One Can Sell Off South Korea

Chao Shigong

Many of the factors hampering South Korea's economy and outlook are contemporary, which can be resolved in time.

If we take a long-term outlook, South Korea's economy has its own unique characteristics and won't be marginalized by the two neighboring economic powers of Japan and China.

South Korea has an independent and well-developed economic system and its exports have remained strong in recent years.

After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, South Korea's financial industry experienced large-scale reforms and has become stronger as a result.

The country has invested heavily in technology and innovation, both the government and the chaebols, particularly in IT.

President Kim Dae-jung's government has increased funding to stimulate the sluggish economy and President-elect Roh Moo-hyun is expected to take a more moderate attitude towards chaebols to spur economic growth.

South Korea is more active in market-oriented science and technology development than China, and more flexible in economic restructuring than Japan. That's why South Korea has survived between its two giant cousins throughout the years and still can survive in the years to come.

(Mr Chao is the senior reporter for the Beijing-based Economic Daily and worked in Seoul constantly)

Stork Visits Air China Plane

Crew delivers baby girl on international flight

By Lily Li

Six hours after Air China flight CA939 took off from Beijing Capital International Airport at 11 am on February 9 bound for Milan and Rome, Italy, the number of passengers increased from 187 to 188.

A baby girl was born on the plane, the first ever incident of this kind on a Chinese international flight. The crew team took care of delivering the child.

At 4 pm Beijing time, pregnant passenger Hu Lifen, from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, told a steward, "I'm getting stomach pains every ten minutes." Hu said she was supposed to give birth on February 20, but it looked like the baby did not want to wait.

After failing to find a gynecologist among the passengers, the crew decided they would have to take care of Hu on their own. At the same time, they called in to Moscow Airport to request permission for an emergency landing.

Stewards first helped Hu to the first-class cabin, which fortu-



Photo by Wang Zeming

nately was both empty and had a proper temperature to serve as a delivery room. "We prepared lots of fresh plastic bags, a large bottle of boiled water and three stainless-steel barrels to sanitize towels and napkins," said Chen Shuzhi, one of the stewards. "We learned about how to take emergency measures to deal with deliveries in our manual."

Following those instructions,

the crew scrambled to find all the necessary instruments, but came up short of one pair of scissors. Chen said, "Finally, we got our hands on a small pair of scissors a girl used to trim her eyebrows."

By 4:45 pm, Hu's labor pains were so severe that her screams echoed through the plane. At 5 pm, her water broke and the baby's head emerged. The crew

quickly sterilized her with vodka, since they had no rubbing alcohol at hand. The baby was successfully delivered at 5:16.

Though the birth occurred in the middle of the other passengers' dinner, no one voiced any complaints. In fact, when the crew announced "a baby has been born" over the speaker system, the passengers broke into applause.

That support brought a smile to Hu's face. She then thanked the crew and asked them for a name for her new daughter.

As soon as the plane touched down in Moscow, two Russian doctors boarded the plane to offer help. They were very surprised to find the inexperienced crew had been able to pull off the delivery, and rated their performance as "Ok! Ok!" and two-thumbs up.

"None of us can believe we were able to do this," said Zhang Yongde, chief steward, "Although the airline had to pay \$50,000 for CA939's 90-minute stay, we all think the safety of the mother and her child was the most important thing."



Wang Zhongping checked out Readers magazine on his way to frosty victory. Photo by Liu Dong

Ice King Crowned

By Chen Ying

Not everyone was hiding from the bracing cold this past weekend. At the Snow World Ski Park in Changping District on Sunday, five brave, scantily clad souls were shivering their way to glory in the finals of the First Ultimate Anti-cold Games.

The organizers of the competition decided to raise the stakes by moving the finals to the park's ice sculpture hall, where temperatures hung around a freezing -20 degrees centigrade. Another condition of the competition was that participants could only wear swimsuits or shorts.

Among the finalists were two women, favorite Wu Jing from Harbin and the capital's own Yuan Xianghua, and men Wang Zhongping, Li Liyin and Wu Hong also of Beijing. They had

all qualified by standing outside nearly naked for more than one hour in the preliminary rounds held between February 1 and 8 at the park.

The freezing air took its toll even on the warmly-dressed observers. A CCTV hostess covering the event struggled through her sound bites, saying "My tongue seems to have frozen," while referee Huang Kezhong ended up catching a cold.

After around forty minutes, some contestants began to shiver, but all refused to give up. Ten minutes later, Yuan threw in the towel. At the two hour mark, Wu Hao gave up, followed by Wu Jing thirty minutes later.

That left just Wang Zhongping and Li Liyin. Li sought warmth after three hours, while Wang grabbed the title with a total time of four and a half hours on the ice.

Two Die When Car Crashes in River

By Lily Li

A 48-year-old man and 46-year-old woman died when their car plunged into the Tonghui River in Gaobeidian County, Chaoyang District, at around 9 pm last Tuesday.

The car took a sudden turn in front of a railroad bridge while speeding down a road running alongside the river. It then ran over two young trees on the roadside and smashed through a seven-meter-long safety barrier before pitching into the river. Witnesses said the car did not immediately sink to the bottom.

A rescue and salvage team arrived quickly after the accident, but because of the dark and cold conditions, was unable to get an exact fix on the car's location until 10 am the next day. Two divers found the car, and then over a three-hour operation, the car and bodies within were brought up from the four-meter-deep waters.

The heavily-damaged car, a red SUV made in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, with the license plate Jing A-G4580, was taken

to the local police station for further examination.

The body of driver Wang Li-anhong was recovered one hour before the car. According to the police, the accident was likely the result of driving too fast and perhaps the influence of alcohol.



Photo by Wang Zhenlong



Photo by Cheng Gong

Massive Bouquet Promises Rosy Valentine's

By Ivy Zhang

For Valentine's day, the world's largest-ever rose bouquet, consisting of 9,999 red roses, has been set up at the Beijing Botanical Garden near the Fragrant Hills in western Beijing.

The huge flower spray is especially sym-

bolic because in Chinese the number nine implies long life or permanence.

Every woman who visits the garden's tropical green house today or tomorrow can receive a free rose, on the condition that the flower is picked from the bouquet by a male companion.

Couples celebrating their golden fiftieth anniversary this year may enter the greenhouse free of charge, as can newlywed women who tied the knot this year.

Entrance fee: 5 yuan for Beijing Botanical Garden; 50 yuan for the tropical green house

Reporter Nailed for Blackmail

By Sun Ming/Shao Hua

A reporter was caught red-handed extorting 150,000 yuan in cash from a Beijing business on January 23, according to the Fengtai District police.

The events were put into motion when Sun Zhen, 33, a reporter for the *Beijing Times*, received a letter from a reader named Guan Zhong (pseudonym) in December last year regarding serious problems plaguing a local software company.

Sun conducted open and private investigations of the company over the following month. On January 21 and 22, he approached the management of the company with the materials he had gathered, according to the Fengtai police, who refused to release the name of the company.

The reporter told the company he was preparing to run a 10,000-word story on their troubles in the near future. He then added he would bury the story for a price of 200,000 yuan.

After some negotiations, the company ended up accepting a figure of 180,000 yuan according to an informal agreement signed with Sun on January 23.

However, the staff involved were only pretending to go along with Sun's demands



Photo by Shao Hua

- they called the Fengtai police to report the crime immediately after he left the office.

Sun subsequently changed the site for the exchange of the money and materials two times. He received a first payment of 150,000 from a representative of the company and demanded to get the remaining

30,000 the next day. It was at the second exchange that he was nabbed by the police as he made his way from the scene.

"I need the money," Sun told the police. He bought a 140,000 house in Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province, last year, towards which he still owes 50,000 yuan.

"I intended to leave Beijing after I got the 180,000 yuan," he admitted.

When contacted about the case, a colleague of Sun's told *Beijing Today* that everyone at the *Beijing Times* was told not to answer any outside questions.

When 12-year-old, Sun was electrocuted in an accident that injured the skin on his head, arms, legs and hands, for which he underwent four skin graft operations. In his confession to the police, Sun blamed the traumatic event for influencing the development of his brain and making him depressed, an indirect cause for his actions.

According to the Fengtai police, Sun graduated from the photography department of the Lu Xun Art Institute in Shenyang and had when previously worked as a teacher in a university in Qinhuangdao. Sun came to Beijing and was hired as a reporter for the *Beijing Times* in 2001.

Around the World for the Olympics

By Hou Mingxin

A native Beijing man is getting serious about the city's drive towards the 2008 Olympics.

The past few weeks, Zhang Qing has been seen tooling around town in a car with a sign in its rear windshield that claims he is going to travel around the world in the name of the Olympics and is seeking company.

His plan is to visit every city around the world that has ever hosted a summer Olympics in his car, shipping it across oceans as necessary.

"I see this as a method of promoting the spirit of the Olympics and letting the world learn more about Beijing and China," he said.

Zhang, 40, is a manager at a state-owned enterprise and a car buff with 10 years of driving experience.

Zhang said over 100 people have expressed serious interest in the intercontinental adventure. Anyone who wants to join Zhang or simply get more information can contact him by phone at 13041029148.

Prodigy Performer Pitches Books



Photo by Wen Ling

By Lily Li

A five-year-old star of stage and screen drew a large crowd to the Wangfujing Xinhua Bookstore last Friday for a promotion of a book about her entitled *Records of the Home Education and Development of the Famous Child Liu Xiaoyuan*. The authors are the girl's parents.

Liu, who has appeared in major music shows and TV programs, signed books and won over the crowd by speaking like a seasoned star.

Buying the Witness?

Making money from being an eyewitness or providing evidence reduces the legal credibility of the evidence. It may even lead to false evidence being given. Eyewitnesses would be tempted to seek the largest personal benefit from the party involved.
— Ye Lin

Why not be more tolerant of enterprising ideas, instead of shooting them down immediately? I suggest that we should let the market decide whether being a professional eyewitness is viable or not.
— Huang Ping

By Su Wei

When a traffic accident occurred on the morning of January 22 on Taiping Nanlu, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, a middle-aged man who was walking along the road at the time hurried to the spot with a notebook and a pen in hand, writing down all the details of the accident and the numbers of the two cars.

Upon the arrival of the traffic police, the man reported the details to them. One of the drivers involved expressed his gratitude by giving the man some money.

The man, who requested anonymity, described himself as a “full-time eyewitness”.

He said that since being laid off several years ago, he had had nothing to do except wander the streets until an idea came to him last year. “I happened to notice a young woman holding a sign at a crossing on Zhongshan Road, saying ‘eyewitnesses please come forward.’ She told me she was looking for anyone who had witnessed a traffic accident in which one of her relatives was killed and the driver had just driven

away. I then had the idea that I could work as an eyewitness.”

Since then he has spent his days wandering along the busy roads in downtown Nanjing waiting for something to witness. “I think the police need eyewitnesses to help them to find the truth about traffic accidents,” he says. “The victims or their family usually pay me around 100 yuan.”

His experience was first reported by *Jinling Evening News* in Nanjing before being picked up by newspapers in other cities. Should people be allowed to make a living from being eyewitnesses? Is the evidence they provide reliable, given that they are receiving money for it? Do police need this service?

Zhao Jianji, an official in a state government department

Being an eyewitness should not be an occupation.

First, most people need some kind of certificate or qualification for their occupation. For example, there are exams to be passed for a civil servant, a lawyer or a doctor. What is the test to measure the

reliability of an eyewitness?

Second, no one is able to predict when and where accidents will happen.

Third, there is no social demand for this. The evidence adopted by the police should be objective and legally credible. The police should only recognize the evidence they find.

Ye Lin, professor of College of Law at Renmin University of China

I firmly oppose the idea of professional eyewitnesses. Both the Chinese criminal law and the civil law already stipulate that every Chinese citizen has the obligation to be an eyewitness.

Making money from being an eyewitness or providing evidence reduces the legal credibility of the evidence. It may even lead to false evidence being given. Eyewitnesses would be tempted to seek the largest personal benefit from the party involved.

Athula Pathinayake, Lecturer in Law, School of Law of Deakin University, Australia

In any court of law whether it is civil or common law, or in a system like China’s, the credibility and admissibility of a witness are crucial factors in a case.

Credibility of a witness can be defined as trustworthiness, reliability and sincerity. Admissibility of evidence in a court of law depends on many factors and mainly depends on the evidentiary rules of that country.

These two exist exclusively. For example what a witness states as the truth may not be admissible in a court of law (such as hearsay evidence). On the other hand what a witness states in a court may admissible evidence, but he/she may not be a credible witness.

As this case suggests, if a witness tries to make a living (I hesitate to call it an occupation) from giving evidence or witnessing incidents, the first issue will be the credibility of that witness. One should take into account the factors surrounding such evidence. First they are a paid witness and not a voluntary witness. Will their evidence be swayed due to the payment or the amount? What will be the situation if the amount offered is not sufficient? Can they re-

fuse to give evidence?

Every person is obliged to tell the truth in a court of law and courts have the power to compel people to give evidence. I believe the credibility of paid witnesses will be compromised.

Huang Ping, lawyer with Nanjing Sanfa Law Firm

It is reasonable that under the socialist market economy people can pursue economic profit. People’s understanding of viable markets and occupations are likely to differ widely. But people are free to participate in the market in a number of ways.

The appearance of new occupations is always controversial. A few years ago, no-one could believe that being a webmaster was a valid job. But now it is both accepted and popular.

Why not be more tolerant of enterprising ideas, instead of shooting them down immediately? I suggest that we should let the market decide whether being a professional eyewitness is viable or not.

An official of Beijing Transportation Management Bureau (who requested anonymity)

I know that transportation law requires everyone actively or passively involved in traffic accidents to serve as eyewitnesses. The man in Nanjing is actively involved so he should report to the police about what he saw, regardless of whether he was expecting to get paid.

The police have the power to decide what kind of information provided can be regarded as evidence or not. They can decide whether the witness is credible or not.

I do not think the appearance of professional eyewitnesses is really helpful. The police are already used to seeking help from the public through the media to get information and they often offer rewards for it as well.

I don’t feel the reliability of a witness is necessarily undermined by their being paid. The trouble is, families might be able to pay these witnesses to keep quiet about vital information. Hence, professional eyewitnesses could make it harder for the police to handle cases fairly.

I Want a Foreign Housekeeper!

Arrival of foreign housekeepers in China becomes national topic

By Chen Ying

Over the past twenty years, it’s become common for Chinese people to acquire many of the trappings of western affluence, such as imported cars, famous fashion brands and technological wizardry. One of the latest “must-haves” is a foreign housekeeper. But is the leap in price worth it?

Today, it’s an open and competitive society. Any product or service can have access to the markets, including housekeepers. The arrival of foreign housekeepers may eventually make the housing service industry stronger.
— Li Zhen

Since the end of last year, there have been a number of reports in the media about the gathering army of foreign housekeepers ready to shuffle into China. The local housing service market is bracing itself for a shock.

According to *Beijing Business Today*, Shanghai Jialilai House Service Company is hoping to hire some Philippino housekeepers to satisfy this new demand. The company still has a lot of bureaucratic procedures to get through before it can start bringing the world’s prestige housekeepers to China, but there’s no shortage of families waiting to cough up the extra for them. Ten families have already placed res-

ervations with the company, nine Chinese-American families and one local family. But the company just wants to import one or two Philippino housekeepers for now.

The foreign housekeepers will earn at least US \$300 to 800 per month if the company’s project succeeds. But it will cost 30 to 40 thousand yuan to organize a system for bringing them into the country.

According to Beijing Business Today, more than 500,000 people in Shanghai will consider hiring top housekeepers. For about 100,000 of them the need is apparently urgent as few local professionals can meet their requirements.

Why? It’s partly down to extent of qualifications. A good housekeeper from the Philippines, for instance, would have at least high school education, as well as good English, high adaptability and plenty of experience. Some are even qualified as nurses, midwives or teachers.

Most of the businessmen from Hong Kong and Taiwan who settle in Chinese mainland cannot bring their housekeepers with them. As well as these people, more and more local families can afford the fees for a foreign housekeeper. But they cannot get them because no local companies can provide them.

According to *Star Daily*, 20 Philippino housekeepers will be arriving in Shenzhen after the Spring Festival. Their services have already been snapped up by businessmen from Hong Kong and some foreigners. Their salary

will be more than 3,000 yuan per month.

Though there is now some debate as to whether it is legal to import foreign housekeepers, it seems there is a market for housekeepers who can provide the best service, regardless of their nationality. Some can’t wait to be able to hire foreign housekeepers while others think the government should support the local variety. So should foreign housekeepers be allowed into the domestic market? Opinions follow:

Li Zhen, executive editor-in-chief, *Migrant Woman*

I think the arrival of foreign housekeepers will strengthen the labor market. Up to now, most Chinese people didn’t have enough money to hire foreign housekeepers. In any case they would probably have preferred a local housekeeper who would be more familiar with their customs and taste.

So why are so many families suddenly eager to employ foreign housekeepers? It’s true that their service quality is better. They know several languages and have professional training as well as experience. There are also a lot of people who need help at home in dealing with business documents, as well as someone who can use a computer or fax machine.

Today, it’s an open and competitive society. Any product or service can have access to the markets, including housekeepers. The arrival of foreign housekeepers may eventually make the housing service

industry stronger.

Wang Haiying, who used to work for a foreign family and is now an employee with Migrant Woman Family, a non-government organization

I once met two Philippino housekeepers, who worked for my employer’s neighbors. I don’t think we were inferior to them. They did the same things as we did.

It’s true that foreign housekeepers can speak English. But so do I. And they can’t speak Chinese. That would be a problem for them if they work for Chinese families.

Meanwhile, Chinese housekeepers really need to improve their own quality, such as learning more daily English and getting more professional training.

I don’t think foreign housekeepers are necessarily better than local ones because we improve so quickly in both educational level and skills. Also, local housekeepers’ salary is from 1000 yuan to 2,600 yuan a month, much lower than that of a foreign housekeeper.

Xiu Yang, receptionist, Huaxia Zhongqing Housing Service Company

We’ve had a number of families asking whether we can provide foreign housekeepers even though we haven’t offered this service before. I know the Philippino housekeepers are supposed to be really good. All of them have professional training of at least six months. They’re also well

SOUND BITES

“Before the match between China and Brazil, China’s coach Arie Haan said it would be a great night while Brazil’s coach Carlos Parreira said the match would be a milestone for Brazil. They were both wrong. Wednesday night in Guangzhou was a tame night. The match was mileage rather than a milestone.”

— Wang Jun, reporter from Beijing Youth Daily, commenting on the performance of Brazil and China’s football teams in a friendly match in Guangzhou on Wednesday night. China spent US \$1.25 million on inviting Brazil to play here. China succeeded in holding the world champions to a 0-0 draw.

“With the overhanging clouds of the Iraqi situation, renewed fears of terrorism and tension with North Korea, fear is stalking the market, and fear drives stock prices lower.”

— John Person, chief financial analyst, Infinity Brokerage Services, commenting on a slump in stocks on Wednesday, pushing key indexes to fresh 4-month lows amid jitters over a possible US-led attack on Iraq and heightened security concerns in the United States.

“Youngsters come to school to do English, maths and science, that sort of thing, not to have their attention disrupted. We are not talking about a mini workplace with half a dozen employees...we have nearly 3,000 students.”

— Principal Allan Peachey of Rangitoto College in Auckland, New Zealand, complaining about deliveries of flowers and other distracting gifts to the classroom.
By Chen Ying

By Su Wei

The underground economy, also called the shadow economy, creates around 10 percent of China's total annual gross domestic product (GDP), according to the State Statistics Bureau. But economist Huang Weiding says the figure is much higher, somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of annual GDP and no less than 1,500 billion yuan per year.

"As its name suggests, the underground economy is beyond government control and supervision," says Huang. "People are aware of the existence of this economy but it is difficult to take action to abolish it due to its variety of economic and even political forms."

A growing network

According to Huang, the major areas of the underground economy in China are money laundering, drug trafficking and smuggling, often with the assistance of corrupt officials.

Every year around 200 billion yuan of state capital flows overseas through money laundering, by opening factories overseas or depositing savings in overseas banks for example. Huang says the underground economy makes enough money every year to pay off 64 percent of the national budget deficit.

Drug trafficking in coastal areas is increasing. Of more than 3000 such cases investigated by police in Fujian in 2000, 24 cases involved drugs in quantities of several hundred grams and 16 involved far higher quantities. According to the Ministry of Public Security, domestic and international drug dealers have become more adept in drug making, selling, trafficking and smuggling.

Smuggling has also become a matter of serious concern, an example being the case of oil smuggling through Xiamen Customs, recently revealed by the media in China. In the first half of 2001 there were seven cases of oil smuggling reported to the central government.

In inland provinces such as Hunan and Sichuan, some criminal groups are accustomed to extending their influence through local entrepreneurs and government officials in order to control industries like gambling. Guo Yegeng, former vice-director of the Culture Bureau of Chaoyang, Guangdong Province who accepted bribes and doctored evidence, was given a six-year jail term in 2000. Han Tianjiang, vice-director of the Public Security Bureau of Ruzhou City, Henan province, formed close relations with the head of the local criminal group, Tang Lifeng, and helped him in obtaining illegal funds and running several mining companies over a period of three years.

Huang points out that illegal financial activities "are becoming more apparent in China." Underground banks in Changle City, Fujian Province have loaned over 130 million yuan in the past six years as well as conducting illegal foreign currency exchange worth tens of millions of US dollars.

A Chinese speciality

Lu Jianping, professor of the College of Law at Renmin University, says the production of fake and bad quality items such as cigarettes, alcohol or household appliances are the most visible aspects of the underground economy. Another area is the production of fake certificates or government seals.

Xinhua News Agency has reported that underground cigarette making factories have become common in some counties, for instance Yunxiao County, Fujian Province. In the mid-1990s, almost every village in the county was producing fake cigarettes. Families had installed video detection machines outside their houses to warn of any sudden examination by the authorities.

Shuangfeng County and Lianyuan County in Hunan Province used to be regarded as the main centers of China's fake seal industry. There were factories in the counties which had the ability to make over 100 varieties of fake seals including ones used by the government and the army.

Huge profits

Qiu Xiaohua, vice director of the State Statistics Bureau, says the huge potential profits encourage people to engage in the underground economy. "People producing fake products can make profits of tens of thousands, even millions of yuan a year. They make ten times as much as people with legitimate jobs."

Yu Yuquan, owner of a fake cigarette making factory in Guangxi who was arrested in early 2001, confessed that his annual profits were at least at 10 million yuan. "Every day one cigarette machine is able to produce at least 125,000 packs of cigarettes," he said. "There are around 80 such machines in my factory."

Policy problem

Guan Yixin, vice president of the Association of China's Strategy Research Institutions, says there are not enough openings for investment of domestic non-governmental capital. "The opening of industries to domestic non-governmental capital has been proposed since 1990 but has not happened." As a result, this surplus capital finds its way into other areas, often underground companies.

Digging into the Underground Economy



Underground Economy

There is also confusion in the area of government regulation of investment. "It is common that some form of economic activity is considered legal today but is declared illegal tomorrow. As a result, it is sometimes hard for people to tell what kinds of economic practice are legal and which are not." Guan believes the underground economy in China is an inevitable result of imperfect regulations and policies.

Guan believes that the underground economy in China had long been in existence under the planned economic system but it was not fully exposed. "With the increasing pace of reform, the change in economic systems has made some polices invalid and new ones have yet to be formulated. The underground economy has taken advantage of the gap between the two economic systems and expanded, both in size and in the number of fields it touches."

Lu Jianping says that people use opening up and reform policies as an excuse for all sorts of illegal activities, from writing off huge sums as expenses to embezzling public money and tax avoidance.

Shao Daosheng, a researcher at the Institute of Sociology at China's Academy of Social Sciences, points out that legislative shortcomings also enable some people to escape punishment. He says that there are specific punishments for smuggling and taxation cases involving amounts higher than 50,000 yuan, but there are no firm regulations governing smaller cases.

Cultural factors

Huang Weiding attributes the growth of the underground economy to traditional Chinese culture: people are more concerned about personal relations than public morals. "There are a couple of Chinese sayings regarding this — 'become an official in order to make money' and 'law never punishes the majority.'" He explains that Chinese people often have only a vague understanding of government regulations and tolerate "certain crimes", resulting in the decreased influence of punishment. "So, while corruption has become a national issue, it has not faced any cultural resistance."

Huang says he has noticed that in some job offers, having good relations with government departments is listed as a key requirement. "It seems that if government officials do not receive certain benefits, companies — even state-owned enterprises — can not run smoothly."

Wang Huawei, head of an iron and steel factory in Beijing, concedes that every year he has to spend half his time competing with other companies in "illegal ways." He told *Beijing Today*, "It is hard to avoid offering bribes if I want my workers to keep their jobs and my factory to keep on running. It seems that officials treat government power as their own 'capital' and try to obtain economic benefit through it. For me, corruption is an inevitable part of economic development."

Lu Jianping asserts that the reason some of the government officials engage with the underground economy is they actually believe it all helps the local economy to flourish. Also, by increasing local financial income, "they can further their own political careers." Government officials and the entrepreneurs in the underground economy have come to rely on each other. "It has become accepted for them to conspire."

Increasingly harmful

The faster the underground economy evolves, says Huang Weiding, the faster the legal economic structure deteriorates. One of the obvious effects of the underground economy is the loss of state capital. "Every day the loss of state funds caused by the underground economy is around 100 million yuan. The annual extent of such funds would be enough to pay for the Three Gorges Project, he says.

Huang says the loss of national taxation income per year is at least 600 billion yuan. "Over 50 percent of the state enterprises, 60 percent of township enterprises, 80 percent of private enterprises and 95 percent of individuals have escaped or escape taxation to some extent," he says.

"Perhaps the worst effect of the underground economy is that it twists people's thoughts and diminishes the credibility of government authority in their eyes," he says.

"Ordinary people start to care less about government policies and regulations and have little interest in the development of society because they think they can do nothing to influence the situation."

Huang warns that when people develop negative or passive opinions towards law and society it erodes the authority of the government, and "once lost it's hard to regain." He says the combination of semi-governmental power won through bribes and violent intimidation gives criminal groups a kind of "public authority" which can challenge that of the government.

Photo / Tony Stone

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Guru or Fraud?

‘China’s leading childcare expert’ questioned

By Sun Ming

Liu Jie used to have the reputation of being China’s leading childcare expert but her reputation has been dragged through the mud in recent weeks.

Since Saturday last week, *China Youth Daily* has been publishing stories claiming that Liu Jie, 39, the manager of Beijing Renzaiqidian International Children’s Education Consultation Center, had cheated a number of clients out of their money.

Five people reported to Beijing Zhanlanlu Police Station on January 22 that Liu had cheated them, said the newspaper.

“We are just a small number of the many parents who were fooled by Liu Jie,” the report quoted them as saying. “In order to take good care of our babies up to the age of three, we paid between 4,800 and 10,000 yuan to the center. But we found that it couldn’t fulfill its promises.”

Liu became famous several years ago for her unique theories on nursing babies. A number of reports have appeared about her in the national media since then as well as a book, winning her a huge number of clients.

Clients cheated

Xie Changkui, 70, former director of the Juvenile Research Department of China Academy of Social Sciences, is one of the people who reported Liu to the police.

“I read a story about Liu Jie in *Beijing Evening News* on August 18 last year,” Xie told *Beijing Today*. “I’m also an expert in this area but I completely believed in her because the story occupied a whole page of the newspaper.”

The story said that Liu had provided consultation service to 20,000 parents in the past 20 years and that she had taken care of 2,000 babies in person. “These babies have clear advantages in intelligence compared with other babies of the same age,” it said.

Xie took his grandson to Liu’s center in Xicheng District.

“I also took along some articles I had written about training the self-awareness of infants, because I wanted to communicate with her,” said Liu. “But it seemed that she was not interested in my ideas at all. She just introduced her three kinds of services enthusiastically.”

Clients who wanted Liu to provide consultation service or instruction at home were charged 10,000 yuan per year. Clients who brought their babies to Liu’s center paid 4,800 yuan per year. Those who consulted Liu over the phone paid 1,800 yuan per year.

Xie chose the first kind of service.

“Liu just put my five-month-old grandson on the bed and shook his arms and legs. I found that what she said and did was always the same with all babies and was very weird. For example, she said babies should lie face down to avoid damaging their head and should drink cold milk to train their stomach.

“She promised to come to my home once a month, but I couldn’t contact her for the whole of October. She’s only come to my house once since I paid her. It seemed that she was always very busy and had no time to pay attention to us, so we decided to stop the service. We asked her to return the money, but she refused.”

According to *China Youth Daily*, Liu never returned money to clients who were dissatisfied with her service. “Also, Liu never gave her clients a formal receipt after she received their money. She only gave a receipt if her clients requested it,” said the newspaper on Saturday last week.

CCTV host, reporter and well-known publishing house involved

Many clients said that they believed in Liu not only because of the media hype but also because of her book introducing her experience of helping babies and her theories.

The book called *Succeeding at the*



Liu Jie

Photo by Chen Ying

Jumping-off Point was published in September last year.

Liu told of how she trained the son of renowned CCTV host Bai Yansong in the book. Bai’s wife Zhu Hongjun wrote an article for the book too. A line saying “Bai Yansong recommends the book” and Bai’s signature is on the front cover, and a longer quote attributed to Bai is on the back cover.

Bai faxed this announcement to *Beijing Youth Daily* on Sunday last week: “I’ve never met Liu. The book made up the part about my family. I’m considering suing her,” said Bai. “She abused my trust,” Bai’s 32-year-old wife Zhu told *Beijing Today*.

Zhu got to know Liu in 1997 when she had been pregnant for six months. “She gave me some instructions about how to take care of myself and gave me advice one time after my son was born. But I called her last year to ask her not to promote the book using my husband’s name.”

“I admit that I wrote an article at the request of Liu, but I asked her not to use it and to cancel the part about my family after I read the manuscript of the book.”

Zhu said that she and her husband didn’t publicize the matter when they first saw the book in September last year because they didn’t want to draw more attention to the book.

The book was written by a reporter named Zhou Xingwang from *Worker’s Daily* and his wife.

“I got the idea after I had read many stories about Liu in media,” Zhou told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Zhou said that he wrote the book according to what Liu told him. “I couldn’t check every detail.”

The book was published by Xinhua Publishing House, which belongs to Xinhua News Agency, in September last year. Huang Xuguo, the editor of the book, is also the director of the periodical editing department.

Beijing Today called Huang on Tuesday:

Huang: We received the manuscript of the book in August last year.

Beijing Today: Only one month between you getting the manuscript and publishing the book?

Huang: Yes, one month. I didn’t think it was necessary to check the book’s contents with experts. Liu’s theories and methods of taking care of newborn babies seemed

reasonable.

Beijing Today: But did you ever check with Bai Yansong?

Huang: No.

Beijing Today: You are the editor of the book.

Huang: I admit that we should have checked.

Angry clients in Wenzhou

Liu was invited by Wenzhou Chizhiyuan Consultation Company to give two lectures, which attracted 2,000 people, in August last year.

Some parents signed up for her consultation service after the lecture, including a man named Mr. Chen who declined to reveal his full name. He paid Liu 10,000 yuan.

“I changed my mind later, but I couldn’t get my money back,” Chen told *Beijing Today*.

Chen then called the police.

“She denied that she had taken any money from me at first. Later she admitted she had and promised to return the money, but nearly half a year later I still haven’t received it.”

China Youth Daily published the experience of an accountant called Wu Haizhen who gave 7,200 yuan to Liu.

“I gave the money to Liu in Wenzhou. However, I heard some gossip about Liu later so I decided to cancel the service and asked her to return the money. She tore up my receipt in front of me and said she had never received money from me.”

Liu Jie accepted an interview from Beijing Today at home on Tuesday

Liu: China Youth Daily has libeled me. I will sue them.

Beijing Today: How many people have asked for refunds from you up to now?

Liu: None. I don’t know why those five people reported me to the police. They didn’t ask me for their money back.

Beijing Today: How much money have you earned since you started your consultation center in 1999?

Liu: You should ask me how much money I lost! My husband left me last year. I wasn’t able to pay attention to my business like before. I have lost nearly one million yuan since 2000.

Beijing Today: What’s the relationship between you and Bai Yansong?

Liu: I got along with his wife Zhu Hongjun. She often asked me on the phone how to take care of herself before she gave birth to her baby Badi.

I also went to her home one time after Badi was born in 1997.

Beijing Today: Did Bai entitle you to use the quote “Bai Yansong recommends the book”?

Liu: We hoped Bai Yansong would recommend the book, so the writer Zhou Xingwang drafted a quote for Bai Yansong. I gave the draft to Zhu and Zhu revised it. Look, here is the quote Zhu gave us (Liu showed a sheet to a *Beijing Today* reporter. Zhu admitted to *Beijing Today* that she did this, but she had asked Liu not to use the quote after she read the manuscript of the book.)

Beijing Today: You gave two lectures last year in Wenzhou?

Liu: Yes. I was very popular there. Hundreds of people came up to ask me questions about nursing babies.

Beijing Today: Did you return the money to Chen?

Liu: He held me down on a chair and asked for money from me. I didn’t owe him anything.

Beijing Today: But you said just now that no one has asked for a refund from you up to now. (Liu refused to answer).

Different voices from some clients:

“Liu’s methods for nursing babies are reasonable. I don’t think she is a cheat. It seems that she was very busy because she couldn’t come to my home at the scheduled time sometimes. But we are not too particular. She came to my home once a month on average,” Yuan Zhiqi, mother of a four-year-old girl who paid 10,000 yuan to Liu last year told *Beijing Today*.

Another client, Cong Ming, said that she viewed Liu as her baby’s private doctor. “I called her as soon as I had problems or questions in taking care of my girl,” said Yuan.

Liu Jie used to be a gynecologist in Wuhai People’s hospital in Inner Mongolia before leaving for Beijing in 1984. Liu opened her consultation center in 1999 and has four employees.

Did Liu commit fraud?

Police came to Liu’s consultation center on Sunday last week.

“The center has a legal managing license. We can’t draw a final conclusion yet on whether Liu committed fraud or just provided service improperly. We are still investigating the case,” a policeman who declined to reveal his name told *Beijing Today*.

Shenyang Police Crack Bank Robbery

Twenty one days after a violent armed robbery of a bank van, police have apprehended four suspects in the case. One suspect is still missing.

On January 18 in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, robbers used explosives to blow their way into the bank vehicle and steal 1.97 million yuan in cash from it. Three people were killed in the robbery and five were severely injured.

Police caught up with the robbers last Saturday. The four they arrested are brothers Zhang Xianming and Zhang Xianhui and brothers Li Yanbin and Li Yanbo, all from Heilongjiang Province. Three hunting guns, 30 bullets and more than 1.8 million yuan were also seized. The one missing suspect is named Zhang Xianguang.

Some Chinese papers reported incorrectly that Zhang Xianguang had been caught in Shanghai. In response, Shenyang police issued a statement in newspapers and on the Internet clarifying that he was still at large and offering a reward of 50,000 yuan for information leading to his arrest.

The robbery happened at 5:55 pm on Saturday in front of the No.1 outlet of Shenyang Commercial Bank, Liaoshen Branch, Shenyang.

According to the local police, the thieves hid the explosives somewhere in front of the bank. When the bank van came around, they ignited the explosives. One security guard and one cashier from the bank were killed immediately.

Following the explosion, three or four of the men got into the van and shot the already injured driver dead. They then shot at bank staff who had come forward to the rescue, leaving five severely injured. The men then escaped in a red Songhuajiang van.

Liu Zujiang, 67, witnessed the explosion. He said he was taking a walk when the explosion occurred about 100 meters away. After a huge bang, white smoke enveloped the bank across the street. He heard one or two gunshots and saw a young man in a helmet and security uniform fall face down.

Liu then saw three or four men running away. “It looked like they had created the explosion. One of them was tall and was carrying a bag in his hand,” Liu said. “Fortunately, very few people were on the road near the bank at the time. Otherwise, more people would have died.”

According to another witness whose name was not disclosed, the van stopped in front of the bank about 5 pm every day to deliver money.

The bank reopened two days after the robbery.

Police have posted a reward worth 300,000 yuan for information about the case.

(Edited by Ivy Zhang)

Where Are They Now?

By Ivy Zhang

A case in which 66 Chinese tourists traveled to South Korea through illegal channels prior to the World Cup last year was heard this Monday and Tuesday at Beijing Intermediate People’s Court.

A gang of seven people headed by Liu Jie, a 30-year-old woman from Hebei Province, were charged with organizing for people to cross the national border illegally.

After providing the fake documents Liu had created for them to China Youth Travel Service, 66 Chinese tourists flew to South Korea on March 15 last year. They disappeared after leaving Incheon Airport.

South Korean police searched for the immigrants extensively but found only 23 of them who were deported back to China. But the whereabouts of the other 43 is still unknown.

The 66 tourists, disguised as teachers, made the trip to South Korea claiming to be taking vacations. But all their documents were soon found to be fake.

The documents were created by Beijing Shengda Investment Company which was run by Liu Jie.

According to *Beijing Youth Daily*, this is the biggest case in which Chinese tourists have disappeared in South Korea. It was covered by both Chinese and foreign media.

The event had negative repercussions for Beijing’s travel agencies who were preparing packages for soccer fans to attend the World Cup held from May 31 to June 30.

In court, the prosecutor stated that Liu Jie, who was sentenced to four years in prison on charge of manslaughter in 1992, had become partners with Kong Yi, 26, a manager from Beijing Zhicheng Hongbo Investment Consultancy. Together they conspired to organize for people to emigrate to South Korea.

They rented a room as their office under a false name and falsified their corporate seal as well as those of other organizations including Tianjin Experimental Primary School and Lu Jia Kindergarten in Yibin, Sichuan Province.

In addition, they falsified employment certificates for the illegal immigrants and provided guarantees for them to China Youth Travel Service under their company’s name. Liu Jie and her gang were paid more than one million yuan for their services.

The seven suspects were caught in late March last year.



Beijing Blooms

By Zhao Pu

It's that time of year again when men rush out to buy flowers for women. Then they can forget about them and not have to worry about them until the next big occasion comes along (the flowers, that is). But if most guys only worry about which bunch of half dead posies to pick up at the last minute on Valentine's eve, others take them a lot more seriously. For instance Kent Tan, a floral designer from Singapore, for whom working with flowers is an art form and a livelihood.

"I've been passionately involved with flowers my whole life, starting from childhood," he says. Though his family didn't approve and put pressure on him to get his hands on something a bit more manly, Kent never gave up hope of indulging his passion.

A desire to travel the world led him overseas to Europe and the US, where he studied floral design and started his career in the field. Now he has returned to this side of the globe, opening a new shop in Beijing and hoping to bring a bit of flower power to the capital.

Pent-up desire

Kent was born near the sea in Singapore. The upbringing in his large family was strict and traditional, with little choice or democracy.

As a little boy, Kent was something of an introvert. "I didn't talk to others that much and kept to myself most of the time," he says. He liked to go to the seashore alone and play by himself. His interest in flowers and other natural things started during that period. "I often picked up interesting stones, tree branches and flowers and arranged them into my own designs at home," he remembers. "They added color to my childhood."

But when his father discovered his special interest, he forbade him from pursuing such "girlish stuff". Once Kent found a small tree root thrown up on a beach by a typhoon. He carried it back home and gave it a wash and put it in his bedroom as a shelf and hung some ornaments on it.

When his father discovered it, he tore it down and threw it away. "He said only girls like that kind of stuff and boys should play with more mechanical kinds of toys," says Kent. "My love for flowers and design was repressed by my father, but I hid my enthusiasm for it and waited for a chance to pursue it again."

Following his father's wishes, Kent majored in auto engineering in college. "I got through college and got my degree. But I had no interest in what I was doing. Engineering was just not one of my strengths." Kent had obeyed his father's wishes as far as college. "But after that, I could do what I liked, as an adult," he says.

On the floral road

Kent didn't plunge into his chosen field straight away, working instead with a vehicle company in Singapore for a while. But soon he shifted to fashion design by joining Yong Garment Manufacturing Company in 1989. In designing sports wear he applied some of the simple and rational elements he had learned in vehicle design and achieved some radical results that he was proud of.

This was still just a step toward Kent's real passion — floral design. During that period, he made some small floral arrangements and decorations at home just for fun. "I often used wooden wine boxes as the container and put some dry flowers and little twisted branches into it. Some of my friends ordered these simple arrangements for their own homes when they saw them," he says.

It was a visit to his younger sister in Germany that pushed Kent firmly onto the road to professional floral design. Kent's



In the past six months, Kent's studio has become successful. At the same time Beijing has become his true home.

sister happened to be living in an old castle in Germany at the time. When Kent arrived she was about to host a party, so he volunteered to do the decoration. He went to buy flowers and arrangement materials and sprinkled his designs around every corner of the castle.

"People asked whether I was a professional floral designer, and were surprised when I said I wasn't," smiles Kent. "I knew then that I had a talent for this."

Kent decided to enroll in the Beorma Institute of Floral Arrangement in Holland. "I was the best student in my class," he says. After completing the professional and masters course in Holland, he went to Scotland. "I had a chance to work and study further in Edinburgh with a top city florist as one of their designers, specializing in weddings, functions and corporate displays."

A desire to travel the world led him to other countries in Europe and the US. The time he spent in New York gave him a more outgoing personality. "I learned to smile and say hello to strangers."

Belonging in Beijing

In 2001, Kent decided he missed home and moved back to Singapore to set up his own freelance floral design business. But he soon found his hometown didn't give him the "sense of belonging" he'd been missing during his years on the road. He'd long harbored a desire to set up his own studio for designing and selling his creations so he decided to try doing it in Beijing last year.

"My first visit to Beijing was ten years ago when I came with my family to China," he recalls. "For the first time in my life, I saw a snowflake. I was so excited and I understood why a snowflake is called 'snow flower' in Chinese. It does look like a tiny flower."

Ten years later, he returned with a friend. Kent inspected every flower shop he found on streets in the city and was disappointed at their similarity and lack of art. "It could be better," he said to himself.

"Let's build our studio in Beijing," said my friend. "Why not," I answered," Kent and his friend found a house with a compound in Soho New Town, and opened their avant-garde studio Blooms On Earth in July 2002.

Kent's studio soon drew a lot of attention even though he hadn't advertised. Many of the patrons became friends. Kent often invites friends to parties in his studio, "not only for fun, also for cultural exchange and communication." In the past six months, Kent's studio has become successful. "It was hard at the beginning. I'm glad that I carried on, thanks to the support of my friends and patrons," he says.

Kent has delved into Chinese culture since he came to China, which has influenced his designs. One of his favorite works was inspired by the silver headwear of Miao minority women.

As he got more and more confident in his business, Kent felt in love with the ancient city. "I've been to Shanghai, Guangzhou and other big cities in China, but I like Beijing best," he says. "I love the old parts like Shichahai, and it has the most possibilities for newcomers."

Kent spent this Spring Festival holiday in Shanghai and Shenzhen, probing the floral design trend in other big cities. "I was a little homesick at the end of the holiday. I missed my home in Beijing," he says. "I believe I have found my sense of belonging in this city."



Chinese culture has influenced Kent's designs.
Photos by Wang Wei

Passing of a Comic Legend

By Guo Jia / Iris Miao

On Wednesday morning at 6:45, the godfather of cross-talk (xiangsheng), 90-year-old Ma Sanli died peacefully in a hospital in Tianjin.

Zhang Baoming, Ma's third son-in-law, told media "his condition deteriorated since Monday night. All his sons and daughters were with him at the end."

The skinny faced performer with the protruding ears and inimitable cross-talk style, who brought so much laughter to the lives of so many during his long career, will be sorely missed by all those who grew up with his humor and wisdom.

Beijing Today reported his farewell performance on December 14, 2001.

At the National TV Cross-talk Contest last month, Ma sent a greeting to the audience via the large screen on stage. His sudden death comes as a heavy blow to all who adored him, both fellow performers and audience.

Ma requested a simple funeral with no flowers and no fuss. As he himself once said, "All my life I have just wanted to give laugh-

ter, and not be a trouble to people. I wish with all my heart for the flourishing of the art of cross-talk, the happiness of the people, and the prosperity of the country."

On Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock, Ma was buried in accordance with Islamic procedure at Beicang Islamic Cemetery in Tianjin.

An employee at the cemetery said, "I grew up with Ma's cross-talk, I can still recite his famous piece *Buying a Monkey*. People used to laugh just at the sight of him appearing on the stage, but today..."

Perhaps the best way to honor Ma's passing is to recall a few fragments of his humor, from his *Eighty Years on the Stage and Farewell Performance*, on December 8, 2001:

"China won the bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games, I was so excited that I couldn't fall asleep that night. I made up my mind that I would try my best to keep fit, and I will participate in the weight-lifting competition then."

"I did pretty good job when I was in school, I was always the second in class in the exams. What? You asked me how many students there are in my class? Two."

An old joke, but the way Ma Sanli told it, it brought the house down every time.

Ma Sanli thanks and farewells his fans at his last stage appearance in December 2001.

Photo by Cui Jun



By Iris Miao

Saturday's Lantern Festival, the 15th day of the new lunar year, brings down the curtain on another Spring Festival season. Life gets back to normal around the country, as people everywhere return to work from their vacations.

Among them, no doubt, will be the cicada sellers from Tianjin, returning to their stalls at Huasheng Laotianqiao, the flower, bird, fish, and insect market southwest of Panjiayuan Flea Market.

Growing flowers, keeping birds, breeding fish, and raising crickets and cicadas were the four most popular hobbies in old Beijing, for people from all levels of society. Many may recall the last scene of Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, when Puyi returns to his former palace, dressed in a Mao suit, and finds underneath the throne a finely carved cicada gourd.

There have been many dramatic changes in the lifestyles of Beijingers in the past several decades, however keeping cicadas and crickets during the winter months is still a popular pastime for many.

Thousand-year-old hobby

"The cricket culture in China has a history of over 1,000 years," says professor Wu Jichuan, chairman of the China Singing Insects Association. There are three main kinds; crickets (Xishuai or Ququ), youhulu (a kind of large cricket), and cicadas (guoguo). Crickets are usually raised for fighting during autumn, while cicadas and youhulu are kept through winter for their singing.

Wu says cricket fighting first appeared during harvest celebrations. Peasants would dig small holes in the ground and pit their pugnacious pet insects against each other.

According to Tang Dynasty (618-907) records, it was the concubines and maids in the court who first kept the singing insects in golden thread cages to keep them company during their endless lonely nights.

By the Song Dynasty (960-1279), cricket fighting had become popular throughout the country. "Every family keeps crickets, and everyone enjoys the spectacle of the fight, male and female, old and young," wrote Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610), a noted intellectual of the Ming Dynasty, in his article *Cricket*. The many elaborate porcelain cricket containers made during the reign of Ming Emperor Xuande (1426-1435) excavated in Jingdezhen, Jianxi Province are evidence that even the emperor was an enthusiast.

Summer sounds in winter

The wild cicada and youhulu have a life span of only three months, but now they almost can be heard all year round, thanks to artificial incubation. To keep the autumn insect alive through winter requires a lot of care. Some people feed their little pets worms bought from the market, others treat them to more sumptuous repasts, such as finely chopped sheep's liver mixed with carrot.

"Imagine when it is snowing heavily and the wind is howling outside, a few friends are sitting around the table eating lamb hot pot. You take the insect from your breast pocket, and listen to



Wu Jichuan and his pet cicada

Photo by Iris Miao

A Song to Warm the Winter



Red winged crickets are rare.

it singing like a bird," says Han Shou, a 19-year-old stage management student, who, following the example of his grandfather, has kept cicadas for the

past nine winters. "Or imagine this, if you have a daffodil at home, put the cicada on the leaf. Just the green color of the insect itself will cheer people up," Han adds, "Is it not wonderful?"

The exquisite gourd

"While listening to the singing of the insect is the main point," says Han, "some people are even more fanatical about the container the cicadas and crickets are kept in."

There are three ways to decorate a gourd; imprint it with a design when it is fully grown, place it in a mould while still small, so it will grow into that shape, or use a mould to create a pattern after boiling the gourd to make it soft. The most prized gourds are those that naturally attain a beautiful shape and color.

The cicada gourd comprises of a container and a lid. The lid is crucial — a good one should enhance the sound, by causing it to resonate.

As the Buddhist saying "a grain of sand is a world and a flower is a heaven" goes, finding enjoyment in life from little things is one of the keys to the charisma and longevity of Chinese culture.



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Art or Smut:

Do Private Parts Belong In Public?

By Yu Shanshan

The book *Tang Jiali's Nude Art*, a surprise hit over the past few months, has reentered headlines nationwide. The controversial work first gained renown because it credited the subject of the photos, dancer and actress Tang Jiali, in an unprecedented move among books on the buff in this country.

Then, last month, the book's photographer, Zhang Xulong, filed a lawsuit against the website Sina.com for illegal use of images from the work.

At a press conference held at Beijing's Xiangshenghang Photography Gallery on February 9, Zhang presented evidence that Sina reproduced eight works from the book without his permission and without crediting him. He said, however, that he was far more upset that the site decided to digitally censor the more private parts of Tang's body in seven of those pictures.

Zhang added that such an act could mislead viewers into thinking "these photos are not suitable for public display. This is an insult to the whole photographic profession and undoubtedly threatens the future of nude photography in China."

Later at the conference, Zhang's lawyer, Jing Decai from the Beijing Right Time Law Office, announced he and his client are demanding a public apology and compensation to the tune of 20,000 yuan.

The case will go to trial in the Haidian People's Court on February 18.

A spokesman for Sina.com responded to the charges by saying that such blocking is common practice among the Chinese media, although there are no laws that directly make it necessary.

This dispute represents a social move forward, according to Han Zishan, professor at the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University. "Put the same situation back two decades ago, and Zhang Xulong would certainly

ly be the one being sued."

Many things changed, however, in 2001, which could be called the year nudity went mainstream in China. With the opening of exhibitions of nude photos in Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and Shanghai, critics recognized that something important was occurring and nudity was becoming a legitimate art subject.

Before Zhang Xulong and Tang Jiali's book became a sensation, there was already a surge of public tumult and interest over the past two years as live body painting shows and open nude photography contests ran in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan and other major cities in China. For example, from August to October 2002, a nude photography contest that toured through 12 cities in Guangdong province drew entries from over 3,000 participants.

Entrepreneurs have taken note of public interest in nudity, with the result that naked models have started turning up at promotional activities. On July 27, the

make-up artist Jimi publicly painted on the bare bodies of three male models in the Xindong'an Shopping Center in a pitch for his line of cosmetic products.

To many people, however, the sudden surge of open nudity is shocking and amoral. Zhang Wei, a taxi driver, said, "It is unacceptable for me to see a person totally naked in public, no matter where." In the view of Liu Na, an elementary school teacher, public shows involving nudity should be kept to the confines of artists' studios, and children should not be allowed entrance.

Local governments have also shown caution about people stripping down in their jurisdictions. On December 24, 2002, the government of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, outlawed all unsanctioned public body painting activities.

"Naturally, conservative reactions are still to be expected though China has transformed from a closed society into a more open-minded one," Chen Zui, research fellow of the Fine Arts Division of the China

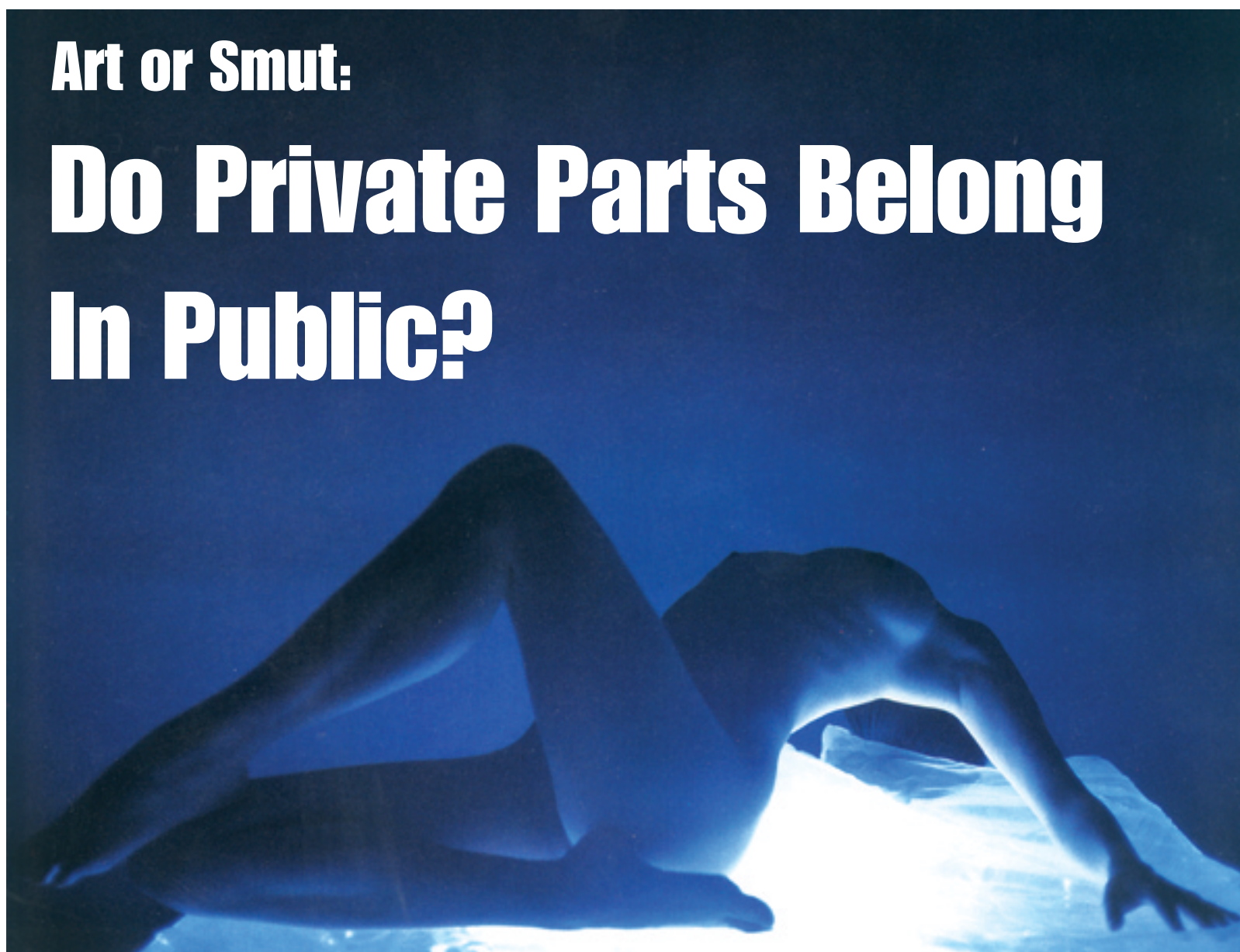
Arts Research Institute observed. "But more and more people have recognized how much interest nude art can generate, which is why some newspapers have accused Tang Jiali of plying her body for fame with this book."

Tang has accused the media of deliberately sexualizing what was intended as a completely artistic endeavor. "They use words such as 'totally naked' and 'sexy' to attract readers, blinding people to my original goal of using my body to create art," she said.

According to Chen, there is a need for a practical classification system for art, which the media could use for deciding how to handle sensitive material.

At the same time, he added that the true test of nudity's value is with the audience. "Whether a model has his or her clothes on or off is not a real standard for judging something to be pornographic or not. Without the right attitude of appreciation, people will only see naked bodies, no matter how artistic a work is," he said.

Photo by Zhang Xulong



Tang's Choice

By Yu Shanshan

Since being the subject of a public promotion in Wangfujing on December 29 last year, the book *Tang Jiali's Nude Art* has caused quite a stir in Beijing and beyond.

The controversy surrounding the book revolves around the fact it is full of pictures of Tang Jiali, a famed dancer and actress, in the buff.

Despite a lack of reviews and promotion, 10,000 copies of *Tang Jiali's Nude Art* have been sold since it was first published. The unexpected demand led to a second run of 5,000 copies, followed by a book signing in Wangfujing.

While nude photography itself is nothing new in this country, Tang went against the norm by actually attaching her names to her photos, a rare and bold move in the domestic publishing industry. However, that same decision has landed her name in gossip columns nationwide, with comments ranging from wildly positive to viciously negative.

"Some of my friends have even called to ask me whether I did it for the money. That is really embarrassing," admitted Tang. "But I think once they see the book, their attitudes will change."

The publisher of the book, the People's Fine Arts Publishing House, seems to hold a similar belief. Guan Hong, editor of the book, describes it as better than any previous works.

He said, "They didn't just spread out a red carpet, have a model lie on it and take photos."

"In the 1980s, this kind of situation would have led to disputes and legal action," said Chen Zui, research fellow at the Fine Arts Division of the China Arts Research Institute, who wrote the foreword to Tang's book.

In 1988, with the launch of the first Exhibition of Nude Oil Paintings at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, the government first started granting permission for the public display of naked art. However, not everyone was thrilled with the idea, as a few of the models that posed for the exhibited paintings ended up suing the academy for personal losses and embarrassment.

However, the climate towards nudity seems to have changed in this country. Guan told *Beijing Today* that from the beginning, he saw a large market for high-profile publications of nude art. "We have a sizeable group of readers who appreciate these books," he said, a claim backed up by a third printing of 15,000 copies of Tang's book in January.

A Brief History of Modern Chinese Nude Art

In October 1979, the debut of Yuan Yunsheng's mural *Water Splashing Festival - Pae-an of Life*, which featured three naked women bathing, at Beijing's Capital International Airport caused a major stir.

In November 1987, Chen Zui's book *On Nude Art*, the first domestic academic work on the field, was published.

In December 1988, faculty of the Central Academy of Fine Arts held the first Exhibition of Oil Paintings of Nudes. The show received a phenomenal 220,000 visitors during its 18-day run.

In November 2000, the play *Butterfly is Free*, which originally ran in Hong Kong and featured an all-nude cast, premiered in Shanghai.

In January 2001, the first National Nude Photography Exhibition was held in Guangzhou, and has since traveled nationwide.

In September 2002, *Tang Jiali's Nude Art*, the first book of bare photographs to carry the model's name, was published. The same month, police in Hengyang, Hunan Province, arrested two models at a live body painting show on the grounds that their actions were pornographic.

In January this year, photographer Zhang Xulong filed a lawsuit against Sina.com, charging the website of illegally copying and tampering with photographs from the book *Tang Jiali's Nude Art*.

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Expats Enjoy Beijing Teahouse

By Dong Nan

More than 900 expatriates from 50-odd countries attended a special production of the classic drama *Teahouse*, staged by the Beijing People's Art Theatre, at the Capital Theatre Saturday.

Teahouse, by renowned dramatist Lao She, is a social critique set against the backdrop of a family running a teahouse over three generations, from the late Qing dynasty to the eve of 1949 and the founding of new China.

Among the audience were diplomats, journalists, business people and students. For those unable to keep up with the fast paced Chinese dialogue, English subtitles were displayed beside the stage. The humorous, often sarcastic delivery provoked much laughter, and the final curtain call was met with rousing applause.

"The activity is to help foreign visitors share the cheerful atmosphere in Beijing, and to see how Beijingers celebrate their Spring Festival," said vice mayor Zhang Mao, in a welcome speech. The Beijing foreign affairs office says it will organize similar activities for expats during future Spring Festival holidays.



Liang Guanhua (left) and Yang Lixin in *Teahouse*

Photo by Cui Jun

Beatles Look-alikes Won't Let it Be

By Nebula Dong

Beatles cover band Twist and Shout will play two gigs at Beijing's Worker's Gymnasium this weekend, kicking off a one-month tour of China.

Twist and Shout formed in the late 1980s as a tribute to the Beatles, some 20 years after the real fab four went their separate ways.

The four piece band, with each member taking on the persona of one of the original Beatles, is supplemented by six dancers.

They promise a night of unrelieved Beatles nostalgia, including favorites such as *All You Need Is Love*, *Let It Be*, *Yesterday* and John Lennon's *Imagine*. After Beijing, the band will give perfor-



Twist and Shout mances in Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Guangzhou.

Where: Worker's Gymnasium **When:** February 13 and 14 **Tel:** 6552 6600-7 (No English service) **Admission:** 80-888 yuan

The Most Romantic Valentine's Day

By Dong Nan

A classical poetry and prose concert, titled the Most Romantic Thing, is being held tonight at the Cultural Palace of Nationalities Theater, to mark Valentine's Day.

DJs from Beijing Music Radio and Beijing Literature Radio will recite traditional love poems, including *To the Oak*, *Waiting for You in the Rain*, *The April Memory* and *The Rainy Alley*, and tell heartwarming love stories to the accompaniment of sentimental classics such as *A Perfect Conjugal Bliss*, *Jane Eyre* and *The Most Romantic Thing*.

"I believe I am the right person for the concert," says Ji Yan, designer and host of the event, "My programs, *Love in the World* and *Meeting in FM97.4*, always talk about affection and tenderness, and devote love to all the audience."

Wu Zhoutong, another DJ from Beijing Music Radio, will make a guest appearance to relate several touching romantic stories. "I feel obliged to participate in this night belonging to lovers," says Wu, who hosts the soulful midnight program, *Midnight Music Talk*.



Beijing Music Radio DJ Ji Yan

Where: Cultural Palace of Nationalities Theater **When:** February 14, 10 pm **Tel:** 6602 2770 **Admission:** 50-380 yuan

WORLDWIDE



Lisa Marie Presley

Lisa Marie Presley Follows in Dad's Footsteps

Twenty-five years after Elvis Presley's death, the only child of the king of rock 'n' roll is launching her own musical career with a newly issued record that has some critics all shook up.

Lights Out, the bluesy first single from Lisa Marie Presley's upcoming debut album, was officially released to radio stations around the country on Monday by Sony's Capitol Records.

Her recording debut poses the twin challenges of overcoming inevitable comparisons to her legendary father and years of tabloid headlines borne of her high-profile former marriages to Michael Jackson and Nicolas Cage. (Reuters)



Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas

'Traffic' Pals Play the Ponies

The *Traffic* team of Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones and producer Laura Bickford are re-teaming for *Monkeyface*, a race-track heist thriller that will shoot in Miami in late September.

Monkeyface is the name of a racehorse, and the script by David Harris revolves around knocking off a racetrack. Stephen Frears will direct.

Douglas and Zeta-Jones play conniving hustlers who are at first adversarial. Frears covered this territory in the film *The Grifters*, but *Monkeyface* is not as ruthless, with romance and double-crosses mixed in equal measure. (Reuters)

Madonna to Deliver Anti-War Message in Video

Madonna, who cultivated her pop vixen image in the music video genre she helped popularize 20 years ago, is using her latest video performance to speak out against a possible US war with Iraq.

The Material Girl plays out her anti-war message, including a scene in which she lobs a grenade at a fashion show, in a video being produced for the title

track and first single of her upcoming album, *American Life*, due for release in April.

The elaborate video was shot last week in Los Angeles, and post-production work is under way. (Reuters)

Elegant Satin, Beads Sparkle on New York Catwalks

Looks of tailored elegance filled New York's fashion runways on Monday as classic stalwarts Oscar de la Renta and Carolina Herrera showed their clothes for autumn.

De la Renta unveiled a line lathered in luxury, from trousers of rich suede to capes of thick cashmere and ballroom gowns of brilliant brocade.



Oscar De la Renta's designs

The glamour of Hollywood in the 1950s imbued Herrera's clothes, especially her pairing of shimmering, wide-lapeled satin blouses with thin, high-waisted wool skirts and her fitted suits in brown. (Reuters)

Jackson to Hit Back with Video of Interviewer

Pop icon Michael Jackson said on Sunday he would authorize the release of video footage to prove a British television documentary about his private life was misleading and unfair.

Jackson's lawyers have already filed complaints with British broadcasting authorities over the film aired last Monday in which the American singer admitted to sharing a bed with children at his Neverland ranch in California. (Reuters)



Michael Jackson

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When West Meets East ...



Mini sheep lantern, 20 yuan

By Huang Lisha

Avoiding clichéd Valentines gifts can be easy in this country by simply opening one's mind to unconventional possibilities. Traditional crafts are one way to add a Chinese flare to this Western holiday and are certain to convey the message of "Wo ai ni."

Mini lantern

Red lanterns are often seen hanging from the doors to homes and restaurants in the capital, especially this time of year. What sets the lanterns made by Zhang Zhongzhi apart is their size - they are only around 15 centimeters high. Their prices are equally small, normally going for 10 yuan to 60 yuan. Most come in diamond or cube shapes and their sides are adorned with beautiful patterns from Chinese paintings or paper cuttings. At the same time, they are still useful, as each has a clay base on which a candle can be placed.

This year, the day after Valentine's Day is Lantern Festival, so getting a fun and cute mini lantern for your sweetie is a way to kill two gift birds with one stone.

Tel: 6841 7907 (Zhang's home. Call for an appointment.)

Shadow puppets

Shadow plays are a kind of traditional Chinese folk performance. The plays are acted by puppets made of donkey leather and dyed in bright colors. The puppets are also articulated and have thin lines attached to different parts, allowing performers to manipulate them into making life-like movements. Shows are conducted behind a nearly transparent veil, allowing the audience to see only the puppets.

According to Yu Guozhu, a master shadow puppet maker, "Besides using them to have fun

and imitate shadow plays, puppets can be put into frames to make beautiful decorations for the home." Depending on size, Yu's puppets range in price from 50 yuan to 80 yuan each.

Dou hua (Bean drawings)

Yu Guozhu's wife, Sun Shifen, is also a folk artist who works in the medium of making drawings with beans that are then mounted in small boxes for display. A few carefully painted beans are enough to create vivid figures in Sun's hands. Inspired by a tour she made of Japan last year, she has created a series of bean drawings

of traditional Japanese women that go for a mere 20 yuan each.

Each is made of two round beans that represent the figures' heads and the bags on their kimonos, a rectangular bean for their torsos and one more that looks like two kneeling legs.

Sun is also willing and able to make specific bean drawings according to special orders.

Tel: 6406 3382 (The Yu's home. Call for an appointment.)

Mian ren (dough figures)

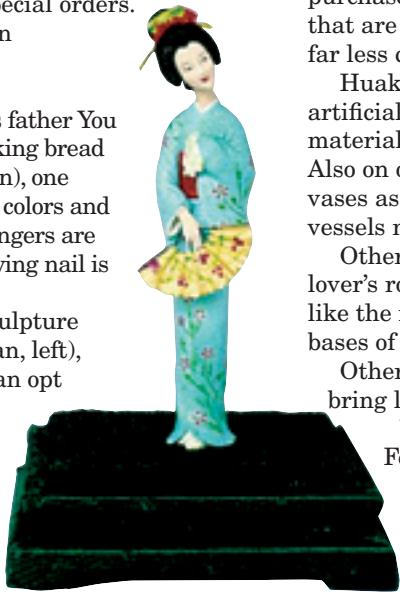
In the skilled hands of You Dongtao and his father You Guocheng, flour is good for more than just making bread - it can form works of art. *Servant Girl* (50 yuan), one of their many creations, stands out with sharp colors and great attention to detail. Though the figure's fingers are less than one millimeter wide, each accompanying nail is dyed red.

For Valentine's, an ideal gift would be a sculpture of a couple of ancient Chinese lovers (100 yuan, left), while those seeking something more grand can opt for the huge *Qianlong Dayue*, or Emperor Qianlong Reviews His Troops, (1500 yuan). This diorama-like piece is made up of over 100 intricate dough figures, sure to impress its way into any heart.

Tel: 6799 4687 (You's home. Call for an appointment.)



Puppet head, 50 yuan



Money Can't Buy

You Love

(But it can help)

Feelings stirred up by Valentine's Day can range from disdain and loneliness to adoration and pure love. Among those with significant others, however, February 14 is sure to at least inspire a hint of dread over one thorny issue - what gift to buy for one's sweetheart?

The classics, of course, are a bouquet of roses or a box of chocolates. Now that this holiday has wormed its way into hearts in this country, though, why not go with something with a little more flare and regional influence? The extra effort it takes to find something special can show you care that much more.

Petals of Passion

By Salinda

Flowers are an easy choice for romantic gifts, but will your love wilt as they do? Why worry when you can purchase more permanent versions that are just as attractive and require far less care.

Huakui Flower Art specializes in artificial flowers crafted from such materials as silk, gauze and cloth. Also on offer are glass and china vases as well as non-traditional vessels made from plant roots, metal and marble.

Other items in the store can add a romantic, ethereal air to a lover's room. Butterflies with paper-thin wings look surprisingly like the real thing, while wild flowers and grasses planted in bases of African wood sculptures have a more exotic feel.

Other solid Valentine's choices are vibrant wreaths that can bring life to doors, walls and tables.

Where: Room 104, Building 12, 2 qu (area), Fangguyuan, Fengtai District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel :** 8763 8117



Photo by Peng Jianwei

What's your favorite shop, stand, bar or restaurant? We will be very happy to share your experience with all our readers and a mystery gift is waiting for you if we print your story. Please contact us at 6590-2522. E-mail: shopping@ynet.com.

Dishing Up Devotion

By Salinda

While diamonds may be a girl's best friend, they can make a pricey and potentially over-symbolic Valentine's gift. One alternative is a piece of something nearly as hard and beautiful and more appropriate to the place - china.

An excellent choice for stocking up on dishes or finding something special is the Han Wen Ge store, which deals in porcelain and pottery made in Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital for 2,000 years. Just getting to the store can be romantic, with its location in the historic hutongs around Gulou and Deshengmen.

On display and up for sale are works by experienced craftsmen, ranging from blue and white to glazed and eggshell porcelain pieces in forms that are functional, artistic or both.

Like a precious stone, china has sentimental and collectible value. Fortunately, getting a good piece can cost less than 100 yuan, though items far more expensive are available to those with the means.

Subject matters on pieces vary from romantic flowers, birds and natural scenes to human and animal figures and images from the Cultural Revolution, though those might be a bit out of place on a day for the celebration of love.

Anyone with a fat wallet and desire to make a strong impression should check out a pair of blue and white porcelain vases that stand an imposing 1.8 meters tall each. On their surfaces is painted a complete reproduction of the classic painting *Qing Ming Shang He Tu*. The dramatic pieces go for a total of 36,000 yuan.

More down to earth and in the romantic spirit are *langhongci* - china with red patterns. Available in a huge variety of forms and styles, porcelain dining sets, tea sets, cups and vases can also make great presents.

Where: No. 131, Gulou Xidajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 9 am - 5 pm **Tel:** 6404 3703



Photos by Peng Jianwei



Vase, 1,300 yuan

Romance of Other Kingdoms

By Guo Yuandan

Enamored shoppers looking for something different for their honeys should look into the Indian Nepal Tibet Handicraft Shop, which is chock full of gifts to surprise and delight.

Most items for sale are relatively small, such as decorative pieces and women's clothes and handbags. In part, that is because they were carried to the store from the borders of China by friends of the owner, ensuring their authenticity.

The Tibetan goods tend to be a bit simple and rough. One fun piece is a handmade paper lantern that can be folded flat like a book. Handmade paper also shows up in calendars filled with symbols such as double fish, the *yin yang* and the Buddha that range in price from 10 yuan to 45 yuan.

Some of the items, such as a Buddha sculpture, a set of jewelry boxes and a shrine, actually came from regular Tibetan homes. Another special item is message bag. This kind of bag is normally hung on a family's door, so people who pass by when they are not at home can leave a note. On the bag there is a picture of the Buddha that is covered out of respect with a yellow cloth. An accompanying bag contains a pen and paper.

Articles from India and Nepal include cloth wall hangings, clothing, handbags and exotic silver jewelry.

Where: India Nepal Tibet Handicraft Shop, opposite the north gate to Workers' Stadium (Gongti Beimen) **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6416 6942



Bracelet set, 30 yuan Photo by Li Shuzhuan

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Round Balls of Gooney Love

By James Liu

For millennia, at the first full moon of every lunar year, Chinese people have hung colorful lanterns from the eaves of their houses. It is not surprising then that the day is called Lantern Festival.

Traditionally, some of the lanterns are covered in riddles to be solved by family members. Another standard activity for the young and old is chowing down on *yuanxiao* or *tangyuan*, round balls made of glutinous rice flour that are boiled either in plain water or soup with vegetables, meat and dried shrimp. The roundness of the balls is symbolic of unity, a consistent message for families

during China's Spring Festival. They are also beloved because they are delicious.

The fillings of *yuanxiao* range from sweet to savory, including such ingredients as walnuts, sesame, flower petals, tangerine peel, bean paste, minced meat or vegetables.

While they are enjoyed nationwide, how these round treats are made differs between northern and southern China. The usual method of forming *yuanxiao* in southern provinces is to shape the dough into balls, make a hole, insert the filling, then close the hole and smooth out the dumpling by rolling it between one's hands.



In North China, sweet or non-meat stuffings are the norm. The fillings are pressed into hardened balls, dipped lightly in water and rolled in a flat basket containing dry glutinous rice flour. A layer of the flour sticks to the filling, which is then dipped in water and rolled in flour again. That

process continues until the ball reaches the desired size.

In the past a primarily home-made treat, good *yuanxiao* are now available at stores and supermarkets all over the city, selling for 16 yuan per kilogram and up.

However, for those that insist on upholding tradition, here is a recipe for making one's own *yuanxiao*:

Ingredients: 500 grams (4 1/2 cups) glutinous rice flour; 200 grams (7 ounces) butter; 200 grams black sesame powder; 250 grams (8 oz) sugar; 1 tablespoon wine

Procedure:

1. Combine the butter, sesame powder, sugar and wine. Then

heat the mixture lightly to make it workable. Form the mixture into small balls about 10 grams (0.3-0.4 oz) each.

2. Combine half cup of sticky rice flour with some water to form dough. Work the dough into a disk-like shape. Cook it in boiled water and take out when done (when the dough floats and goes translucent). Let the dough cool, then add the rest of the flour. Add water and knead until the dough is smooth.

3. Work the dough into small balls around 0.3-0.4 oz (10 grams) in weight. Press a hole into one ball with your thumb. Insert one sesame ball into the hole and fold dough to cover. Repeat process with rest of dough balls.

4. Cook the prepared *yuanxiao* in boiled water, stirring continuously in one direction. When the balls float, turn down heat and cook one more minute. Drain and serve.

Dining Out on Valentine's

By Wesley Lei
Traders Bar
Traders Hotel Beijing

Candlelit, four-course Western dinner for two, at 699 per couple including a glass of champagne each and free flow of soft drinks, beer and wine. **When:** 7 pm **Tel:** 6505 2277 ext. 2709

Astor Grill
The St. Regis Beijing

Five-course menu for two, including champagne, music, candlelight and a very special gift. **Cost:** 1188 yuan plus 15 percent (for two), 688 yuan plus 15 percent (for one) **When:** 6 pm-10 pm **Tel:** 6500 2233 ext. 8085

Chocolate Promotion
Jianguo Hotel Beijing

Dark, white or black chocolate and other tempting chocolate delicacies. **When:** February 3-28 **Tel:** 6500 2233 ext. 8085

Special Evening
Kerry Center Hotel

Coffee Garden, Lobby Lounge, and the Horizon Chinese Restaurant and bars all have special offers of set meals at 188 yuan plus 15 percent service charge, also a lucky draw at the Lobby Lounge. **Tel:** 6561 8833 ext. 6636

Atrium
Hilton Hotel Beijing

Chef Rudolf Kunkel and his team have prepared a buffet with food from all around the world at a price of 218 yuan plus 15 percent per person. For an added 80 yuan, free flow sparkling wine all evening. **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext. 7331

Nishimura Japanese Restaurant
Shangri-La Hotel Beijing

The special lovers menus available at the Nishimura Japanese Restaurant is an eight-course feast for 688 yuan plus 15 percent for two persons. Every couple will receive a rose and a gift box of heart-shaped chocolates. **Tel:** 6841 2211 ext. 2719

Candlelight Set Menu
Grand Hotel Beijing

Includes one bottle of champagne, one box of heart-shaped chocolates and one rose

When: 6 pm-9:30 pm **Cost:** 1,288 yuan per couple **Tel:** 6513 7788 ext. 347

Cafe Renaissance
Jingguang New World Hotel

BBQ Buffet Dinner, salad bars, all kinds of desserts and soups. Each customer will receive one complimentary glass of champagne and every lady a complimentary rose. **Cost:** 528 yuan per couple **Tel:** 6597 3388 ext. 2513

Valentine's Day has joined the ranks of Halloween and Christmas as a Western holiday that has struck a nerve with young Chinese. As more people decide to celebrate their love on February 14, more restaurants are looking to cash in with special menus and deals with romantic themes even including mermaids. Below are four restaurants offering a range of different activities for the amorous and hungry.

By James Liu

Dance of the Mermaids at Taipingyang Underwater World

Taipingyang (Pacific) Underwater World, located at the base of the China Central Television Tower, houses an 80-meter-long walk-through aquarium. Visitors go through a tunnel surrounded by fish, offering the most spectacular way to view the creatures



of the deep in Beijing. For Valentine's Day, a special buffet dinner will be held in the tunnel at a cost of 199 per person and 380 for couples, including entry tickets to the aquarium.

Dinner will start at 6 pm and a mermaid diving performance will commence at 7:30 pm. Lucky draws will be held for prizes of shells and coral. Plus, all those that attend will receive coupons for 500 yuan of beauty treatment courtesy of the Shuyuanhui Company.

The organizers will also hold a Prince Poseidon and Princess Mermaid competition open to any women wearing white or blue and gentlemen in suits. The whole event will end at 11 pm with a dancing party.

Valentine's diners and all guests are encouraged to check out the star attraction of the aquarium, some highly endangered Humboldt penguins from Peru. Moreover, the touch pool

allows visitors to get up close and personal with such sea creatures as rays, sharks and starfish.

Add: First floor, Central Television Tower, No. 11 Xisanhuan Zhonglu, Haidian District **Open:** 9 am - 6:30 pm (Mon. - Fri.); 8:30 am - 8 pm (Sat. - Sun.) **Tel:** 6846 1197, 6846 1172/3 **General admission:** 60 yuan per person

Salmon Banquet at Grand Hyatt Beijing
Couples who love fish will rejoice at the salmon banquet held at the Grand Hyatt Beijing the evening of Valentine's Day. The event is being organized by Xiyan Weddings and the Norwegian Seafood Export Council, centering around a fish that can represent the best of a relationship: raw, romantic, spicy and tender.

Dinner will be accompanied by jazz music and reach a romantic climax when one customer proposes to his favorite lady. Other men ready to pop the question can contact Xiyan Weddings, which will arrange free tuxedos to help them win over the ladies at the event.



The dinner is only open to the first 100 people that call to make reservations.

Fare for the evening will include timbale of smoked salmon and baby potatoes, marinated salmon roulade with pesto nascarbone, pepper crusted salmon on a spicy pomelo and coriander salad, salmon clay pot with coconut and green curry sauce, steamed lemongrass flavored salmon consommé, and salmon and ginger dumplings. Special desserts and coffee or tea will follow.

Add: second floor underground, Grand Hyatt Beijing, No. 1 East Chang'an Avenue **Open:** 7 pm - 10 pm **Tel:** 6407 4602, 8518 1234 ext. 3657 **Average cost:** 399 yuan per person plus 15 percent service charge

Authentic Western food at the Courtyard

Despite its reputation and choice location at the eastern gate of the Forbidden City, the subtle door to this independent restaurant means it can be easy to overlook. Inside, the windows of the classy two-story building

offer great views of the moat and walls of the old palace.

The environment gets even better, though, since the Courtyard is also an operating art gallery. These days the walls are decorated with huge photographs from Chinese artists. A small, intimate loft is open for drinking and enjoying fine cigars.

The kitchen's specialty is fusion cuisine, meaning a mixture of Western and Asian styles and flavors. The head chef, now a Chinese citizen, was born in the Philippines and grew up in New York. According to general manager and sommelier Dan Siebers "It's expensive to dine here, quite expensive. But we are the best in the city and you cannot find any other eatery to compete with us."



Every three or four months the chef changes the menu, normally offering around 25 different main courses on each. For Valentine's Day, the Courtyard has created a six-course set meal that includes Australian lobster and American beef. This gourmet

dinner costs 888 yuan per person plus a 15 percent service charge. If that doesn't show you care...

The restaurant justifies its high prices with its high pedigree - among other honors it is Beijing's only winner of an Award of Excellence from the US magazine Wine Spectator, acknowledging its outstanding wine list that includes over 300 vintages.



The Courtyard is only open for dinner between Monday and Saturday, but offers a special three-course lunch on Sundays that goes for a more reasonable 150 yuan per person, including a glass of wine and a cup of coffee. "It's quite cheap. At dinner time, just one of the three dishes would cost about 180 yuan," said Siebers.

Add: No. 95 Donghuamen Dajie, Dongcheng District **Open:** 6 pm - 10 pm, Sunday lunch 11 am - 2 pm **Tel:** 6526 8883 **Average cost:** 200 yuan per person

Touch Cool in Haidian District
This bar seems to have an identity crisis: its English name is Cool Touch, while its Chinese name, "Kure" translates to "cool heat". Whatever you call it, this bar, which opened in the heat of May last year, has proven a popular Haidian hangout.

The bar offers Chinese and western-style snacks at low prices. A simple salad goes for a

mere 5 yuan, while the establishment's top dish, a steak set meal, costs 68 yuan. Despite the prices, the food is high quality, as the chef has experience in a restaurant in the Gloria Plaza Hotel.

Touch Cool has established a reputation as a good place to catch live music with performances from bands and singers nightly.

In order to keep packing them in, the bar organizes lucky draw competitions from Tuesday to Sunday every week. Winners get gifts from wine and beverage companies.

Drinks are also reasonable, with a wide range of beers going for an average of 10 yuan per bottle. The cozy décor and groovy music ensure Cool Touch is a good choice to chill out any time of the week.



For Valentine's Day, Cool Touch is offering a four-course set meal of steak, quick-fried oysters, cream soup and salad for 88 yuan per person, all while the rock band Mofang (Rubik's cube) performs until 12:30 am. Valentine's diners will have free photos snapped and can take part in special lucky draws.

Add: No. 35 Haidian Street, Haidian District **Open:** 10 am - 2 am **Tel:** 6261 0099 **Average cost:** 30 yuan per person



Valentine's Events

Mood for Love

A lineup of carefully selected rock acts who promise to set the mood for love. Spanning the spectrum from alt rock with Mountain Man (*Shan Ren*) to industrial strength metal with S Axletree (*S Zhoucheng*) to hip hop. Sophie's Garden (*Sufei de Huayuan*), Sound Fragment (*Shengyin Suipian*), Liquid Oxygen Can (*Yeyang Guantou*), Convenience Store (*Bianli Shangdian*) and Tookoo will also present their latest creations. The next night Overload (*Chaozai*) and Gao Qi will hit the stage.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** February

14 and 15, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 50, 40 yuan, students 30, 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

YPHH Valentine's Night

On this special day all single people in Beijing will be invited to come along for a wonderful Valentine's dinner party! Apart from a welcome drink, Huxley's offers a dinner buffet and a free flow of booze. Dancing, fun and match-making games mean nobody has to leave without a valentine!

Where: Huxley's 2, a bit east of the South Gate of Worker's Stadium **When:** February 14, 6:30-9:30 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6552 9155

66-365 yuan **Tel:** 6598 7674 ext 508

Chinese Folk Music

The China Song and Dance Troupe present *Reflection of the Moon over Two Springs* (Erquan Yingyue), selections from *The Butterfly Lovers*, *Jasmine* (Moli Hua), and more. Conducted by Liu Wenjin.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** February 15, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6598 7674 ext 508

Activities

Fireworks Fun

The Liu Yang Cup Fireworks Evening Party and a special ceremony to mark the millionth tourist to Miyun are set to be a lively affair. Firecrackers will be set off to celebrate the Lantern Festival, along with a flower show, folk lantern show, stilt-walking performance and local snacks.

Where: Olympic Park, Miyun **When:** February 15 **Route:** take bus No. 918 at Dongzhimen **Tel:** 6904 1194

Ferry Good Fun

A Lunar New Year celebration will be held at the Shidu (Ten Ferries) scenic spot on the fifteenth of the first month of the lunar calendar. Enjoy beautiful scenes such as an ice waterfall, stay in a farmhouse and taste local food.

Where: Shidu, Fangshan **When:** February 15 **Route:** take bus No. 917 from Dongzhimen **Tel:** 6134 0520, 6134 0085

Guessing Lantern Riddle

To celebrate Lantern Festival, visitors are invited to check out thousands of lanterns bearing bilingual riddles with prizes for those who can answer them.

Where: Wangfujing Xiaochi Jie **When:** February 14-16, 9:30 am-8 pm **Tel:** 6514 0548

Sports



Ice Gala

Sponsored by the International Skating Union, the 2003 Four Continents Figure Skating Show will be held in China for the first time. Over 100 athletes from around the world will compete for four gold medals. All competitions, from the preliminaries to the final competitions and winners' performances, are open to the public.

Where: Capital Gymnasium **When:** till February 16 **Admission:** 120-480 yuan, VIP 800, 2008, 1488 yuan **Tel:** 6598 7674 ext 508

Hike Quarry Man Trail

Start the walk by hiking in a deep valley, following a well-used trail to the orchard on the slope of an open valley, which leads up the hill. Walking up a stretch of slightly overgrown path we

will get to a clearing on the ridge where there are pine trees. On the floor of the clearing there are many cigarettes butts. The quarry men who work at the quarry in the neighboring valley maintain this clearing and the trail beyond. We will use part of the quarry man trail to get halfway down the valley before we go up into some fairly old woods.

This part of the trail follows a dry streambed up a rather deep valley. Leaving the shaded woods on to the pass, we will see a totally different landscape. The color of the rocks, vegetation and scenery are very different.

Where: Changping, north of Beijing **When:** February 16, meet at 8:30 am outside Starbucks at Lido Hotel, 9 am at Capital Paradise front gate, come back at 5 pm **Admission:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701 003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Parties

Monkeyfunk Throwdown

DJ Daddy Vegas returns to Beijing! It is your chance to get funkdaified. Joining him is long-time BBC Radio host Steve Barker dropping dub deeper and doper than anyone has dropped before.

Where: Club FM **When:** February 15, 9 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 8562 2309

What's Up

On this special night Xingqisan Luxing is to perform. Tomorrow night, Kill Tomorrow, Dongluan and Misandou take the stage. On Tuesday night Kaxin Mote's music will warm you up.

Where: What, opposite north gate of Business and Economics University, Chaoyang **When:** 9:30 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 13910 209249



Monika Kruse

Berlin Beats

German DJ extraordinaire Monika Kruse will deliver her funky beats at Kiss for a Valentine's edition of Plus's regular parties. Local boys Mickey and Dio will provide support.

Where: Club Kiss **When:** February 15, 9 pm **Admission:** 60 yuan, includes one drink **Tel:** 8455 2361

Love Rocks

Fourteen kinds of wine and a top band perform for Valentine's Day. Four lucky winners will get a Montrose wine package, hotel restaurant coupon and Heineken beer package.

Where: Carburetor Music Bar, west gate of Olympic Stadium, 1 Anding Lu, Chaoyang **When:** February 14 **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6491 0228

An evening of love

Celebrate Valentine's Day with an evening of love, including a candle-lit dinner (Chinese and Western buffet), performances by a national theatre troupe singing love songs from around the world (including famous opera pieces by Verdi, Tosca and Bizet), small gifts, free beer and soft drinks, and a professional lighting and sound system.

Where: Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** February 14 **Admission:** 289 for one person, 489 or two **Tel:** 8457 3622

Love at The Loft

Set meal, wine and a backdrop of classic romantic films.

Where: the Loft **When:** February 14 **Admission:** 318 yuan per couple **Tel:** 6501 7501

Exhibitions



Village in Guizhou

Impressions of Dong and Miao

During Spring Festival of 2002, Finnish photographer Esko Pohjnpalo visited some Dong and Miao minority villages in Guizhou, snapping vivid, moving pictures of the land and people's daily lives.

Where: Da Zhong Photo Gallery, Xiangshenghang, 22 Meishuguan Dongjie **When:** February 19-March 5, 8:30 am-7 pm **Tel:** 8403 4205



Painting: Children in spring

An Appointment with Spring

Over 70 paintings from modern Chinese artists.

Where: New Art Center, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** till February 25, 9 am-5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6528 9103



Fantastic Zoology of Mexico

Manuel Jiménez and his two sons work together to produce fragrant cedar woodcarvings called *alebrijes*, native to the Oaxaca region of Mexico. On display are the mythical inhabitants - colourful, playful, and allegorical - of the Jiménez imagination.

Where: Jintai Art Museum, in Chaoyang Park, 1 Nongzhan Nalu, Chaoyang **When:** February 14-26, 9:30 am-4 pm **Tel:** 6501 9441

Contemporary Israeli Design

A show of various works by contemporary Israeli designers.

Where: Jintai Art Museum, in Chaoyang Park, 1 Nongzhan Nalu, Chaoyang **When:** February 19-March 6, 9:30 am-4 pm **Tel:** 6501 9441

Solo Show of He Jiang

He Jiang graduated from the fine art department of Xinjiang Art College in 1990. He has taken part in many shows and his work *Ancient City* won a bronze medal at a silk road exhibition.

Where: Blue Dream Gallery, opposite 46, Sanlitun Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** till February 28, 9 am-10 pm **Tel:** 6415 5812, 13901 244283

Beauty of Landscape

This show features the beauty of the landscapes of artist Ren Jingqin, such as southern towns in the rain, bamboo houses among palms and villages. Bright environments are common themes in his works, along with red crowned cranes on a river, swimming swans and ducks and ships against the setting sun.

Where: Melodic Art Gallery, 14 Jianguomenwai Dajie, opposite Beijing Friendship Shop **When:** till February 28, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6515 8123

New German Exhibition

An exhibition of the works of German artist Hugo, whose pastel and water color pieces show expressionistic influence and strong feelings.

Where: Z&A Space Gallery, F422-511, Wangjing Xiyuan, Chaoyang **When:** till March 16, 1-7 pm **Tel:** 6471 1700 **Email:** director@zaspace.com

Performance

Acrobatics

Performances show China's heritage of civilization, action skills, beauty and fashion.

Where: Wansheng Theater **When:** everyday, 3-8 pm **Admission:** 100-500 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 508

Caomei Fields Forever

Let the Tony Band touch your rubber soul and take you back to the days of penny lanes and yellow submarines. These four Americans have performed in the US, Europe, Japan and the Philippines.

Where: Workers Gymnasium **When:** February 14, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6501 6655, 6708 2161

Beautiful Percussion

Performed by the Girl Red Tassel Percussion Orchestra, the program include *Sea*, the *Holy Music* (Shengqu), *The World of Mortals*, *Mountain Drum* (Shangu) and more.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** February 14, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 198

Movies

I Love You

Directed by Zhang Yuan, starring Xu Jinglei, Tong Dawei. The story tells of a vibrant young woman with a tragic hidden past. She gets engaged to a college classmate whose untimely death leaves her in shock. Later, she reconnects with her former fiancé's best friend. They marry and settle into a cramped life in a hospital dormitory. They embark on a journey, thinking that they can head smoothly into the future, but find out that their baggage arrives even before they do.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** February 14-15, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398 **Email:** michael@cherrylanemovies.com.cn

Le Aventure di Pinocchio (The Adventures of Pinocchio)

Directed by Luigi Comencini. Carved with care from the single branch of an oak tree by the lonely puppet maker Geppetto Pinocchio. Pinocchio is brought to life by the magic of the Oak Fairy. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy Cultural Office **When:** February 20, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Gilda

Directed by Charles Vidor, The ultimate screen goddess in the ultimate screen goddess film. Lush 1940s pin-up Rita Hayworth plays Gilda, the wife of a Buenos Aires casino boss, whose new low-life friend (Glenn Ford) turns out to be a man from her past. Includes that memorable glove-tease scene that drove many a WWII GI wild. English with Chinese subtitles.

Where: Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** February 15, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

Zhou Yu's Train

Directed by Sun Zhou, starring Gong Li, Sun Honglei and Tony Leung. A 90-minute movie that follows Zhou Yu on her frequent train rides to visit the man she loves. It is aboard this train that she meets another man, a fellow passenger. But her real transformation comes when she leaves both men to embark on her own journey. In Mandarin.

Where: at local cinemas **When:** till February 28



I Solisti Veneti Concert

Directed by Claudio Scimone, the I Solisti Veneti Orchestra enjoy a firm reputation both with the general public and with the specialist music press as the most popular and technically outstanding Italian orchestra, and one of the finest orchestras in the world, a reputation based not only on their highly acclaimed concert performances and recordings but also on the impressive variety of the cultural and artistic fields they have explored.

For this concert, they will open with Vivaldi's Concerto in re magg. RV 208 "Grosso Mogul", and continue with Rossini, Bottesini, Drigo and Verdi.

Where: Italian Embassy Cultural Office **When:** February 18, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Lecture

Lantern Festival Village Tour

The fifteenth day of the Chinese New Year in the lunar calendar is the last day of the Spring Festival holiday. It is also called Lantern Festival because people make lanterns and eat sweet dumplings (*tang yuan*). Take a tour to a village in the suburbs of Beijing to celebrate the day by making lanterns and enjoying tang yuan and fireworks.

Where: meet at the lobby of China World Hotel. **When:** February 15, 3-8 pm **Admission:** 60 yuan (including transportation, lantern and food) **Tel:** 8851 4913

Stage

Light up a Thousand Households

Directed by Lin Zhaoxia and Li Liuyi, and starring Pu Cunxin and Song Dandan, a popular TV actress, this hilarious comedy celebrates changes in the daily lives of common people.

Where: Capital Theatre **When:** February 14-March 16, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan students 40-60 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

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By Guo Yuandan



Hot Springs In My Memory

By Jerry Ho

This winter in Beijing is proving to be a snowy one. One Saturday, some weeks ago, when yet another snowfall had left Beijing with a white coat, I was leafing through a pile of travel brochures, trying to decide where to go during the Spring Festival holiday. Suddenly, the name Budongquan (不冻泉), the Spring that Doesn't Freeze, caught my eye.

I traveled through this small town on a trip to Tibet three years ago. Lying at an altitude of 4,600 meters in the Kunlun Mountains, Budongquan marks the entrance to the Tuotuo River area (沱沱河). Though I did not get off the bus on that occasion, the name of the town, implying a nearby hot spring, stayed in my mind.

During one of my trips to Tibet, I became quite ill with altitude sickness. But when I plunged into a hot spring pool at Yangbajing (羊八井) by the side of snow mountains, all the fatigue and chill melted away in the warmth of the spring water.

Yangbajing lies on the Qinghai - Tibet Highway, about 90 kilometers north of Lhasa. It is one of the largest areas of geothermal activity in China, with hot springs, geysers, and hot water rivers and lakes. A strikingly beautiful scene occurs at dawn, when huge clouds of rising vapor transform into a thick blanket of fog. Erupting geysers are a common sight, with columns of boiling water bursting more than 100 meters into the air.

The hot springs in the Changbai Mountains (长白山), in Jilin Province, have quite different characteristics. The average temperature of the water ranges from 60 to 82 Centigrade. The flow rate, temperature and quality of the spring water remain stable, making it an ideal place for recuperative bathing.

Unlike the hot springs in Tibet, which bubble up directly through the earth, the spring water at Changbai comes through fissures in the mountain, flowing out in streams of varying sizes to form miniature pools, not big or deep enough for even person to bathe in. The nu-

merous streams of hot water from dozens of outlets in the mountains are said to resemble dragons stretching out, explaining why the springs are known as "dragon wells."

On arrival at the remote forestry farm at Erdao Baihe (二道白河), at the foot of the Changbai Mountains, visitors have the opportunity to bathe in the spring water, in artificial pools in small cottages. It is more like a sauna than a bath, though the water itself comes from the mountains.

Ferns and grass grow by side of all the small water pools. Local people cook eggs in the yellow spring water and offer them for sale. The egg whites are somewhat slimy, but the yolk is fully cooked. They are known as "magic eggs" by the locals, and regarded as one of the wonders of the Changbai Mountains.

Chongqing North Hot Spring Park (重庆北温泉公园) is located to the south of the Jialing River and north of Jinyun Mountain. A temple was built here in 423 AD, during the Southern Song Dynasty, and was reconstructed in 1432, during the Ming Dynasty. In 1927, it got its present name, North Hot Spring Park.

Structures in the park include four main halls. Sansheng (Three Saints) Hall sits at the entrance of the temple. To its rear is the Jieyin (Reception) Hall with a small square pool. Railings on a stone bridge over the pool are carved with flowers, birds and kilin (a mythological Chinese beast and symbol of good luck). A Buddha statue stands in the Statue Hall, in front of which there is a pair of delicately carved stone lions. The last, Guanyin Hall, is roofed with steel tiles.

There are ten hot springs in the park. They boast an abundant water flow, with the temperature remaining around 35 to 37 Centigrade.

During spring, when the outside air is relatively chilly, bathing takes place inside small separate caves at the foot of the hill. Inside each cave is a chaise lounge and a small rock-enclosed pool. A valve on the wall regulates the flow of hot water.

Beijing is nearing the end of the coldest winter in 62 years, and one of the snowiest. One alternative to sitting inside counting the days to summer is to head out of town for a spot of hot spring bathing. There is nothing quite like dunking yourself in a steaming mineral spring as a means of casting out the winter demons.



Hot Facts

By Jerry Ho

Bathing in hot spring water is a great way of easing muscle and joint pain, and also helps dilate the blood vessels to improve blood circulation and metabolism. Bathing alternately in hot and cold water causes the blood vessels to dilate and shrink, helping to build up muscles.

The temperature, mineral content and acidity of spring water varies greatly from place to place, so it is advisable to try to match the type of springs with one's own physical condition



Hot Spring Bathing around Beijing

By Jerry Ho

Jiuhua Country Villas

This is the best known of Beijing's hot springs resorts. It used to be quite expensive but now the prices have dropped greatly. Medicated bath and sauna costs 50 yuan, as does a good meal in their restaurant. Room rates range from 350 to 480 yuan, with discounts of up to 70 percent available at weekends. Other entertainment available includes archery, body building, tennis and badminton.

Where: Jiuhua Country Villas (九华山庄), Xiaotangshan, Changping District
Tel: 6774 4212

Fulaigong

The hot spring named Longmai (Dragon Pulse) was once very popular. Now, the adjacent Fulaigong (富来宫) is even more prosperous. You can stay in a villa or a separate house for the price of an ordinary standard room (200 yuan). Guests can enjoy hot spring baths in their own suites. One villa can accommodate seven to eight. Reservations are necessary during holidays.

Getting there: Drive east from the Xiaotangshan exit of the Beijing - Changping highway. Go north for 200 meters at the Daliushu cross road.
Tel: 8760 1888

Shunyi Chunhuiyuan Hot Spring Vacation Resort

Chunhuiyuan (春晖园) features large hot spring pools and great variety of medicated baths. Located in Shunyi District by the Wenyu River (温榆河), it is only a short trip from downtown Beijing. Many guest rooms are supplied with open hot spring pools so guests can enjoy the snow scenery and the comforts of hot spring bathing without even leaving their rooms.

Where: west side of Gaoliying Town (高丽营镇), Shunyi District.

Getting there: Turn left at Sunheqiao (孙河大桥) on the Beijing - Shunyi Road, then head west along the river.
Tel: 6774 4212

Badaling Hot Spring Vacation Resort

This resort features a large indoor hot spring playground designed especially for kids, with water slides and swimming pools of different depths. Guest rooms are three-star rated. The restaurant offers Huaiyang (Southern Jiangsu) cuisine. Badaling Great Wall, Kangxi Grassland (康西草原), Wild Duck Lake and Longqing Gorge (龙庆峡) are all close by.

Cost: 488 yuan per standard guest room, 60 yuan (70 yuan on weekends) for entry to water entertainment facilities.

Where: 35 Guishui Beilu, Yanqing County
Tel: 6914 8833

Huafeng Hot Spring Castle

Apart from hot spring bathing, Huafeng Hot-spring Castle (华风温泉大城堡) has a variety of recreational offerings, including basketball, indoor golf, mountain climbing, archery and shahu balls. It is also the center of the Yanqing ecological tourism area and close to many tourist sites — Longqing Gorge and Cangmi Gudao (仓米古道) scenic area to the east; Kangxi Grassland, Wild Duck Lake and Jizuhaihe (九寨河) scenic area to the west; Badaling Great Wall to the south; and Songsan virgin forest (松山原始森林) to the north.

Getting there: Huafeng is a one-hour drive along the Badaling Expressway.
Tel: 8760 1888

Tulip Hot Spring Vacation Resort

Every villa offers hot spring water. Other facilities include a hot spring playground and a bird park. The specialty of the restaurant is "braising in steel pot."

Getting there: Turn left at Weigou (苇沟) exit of the Airport Expressway. Go right for two kilometers when you see the sign for Qianweigou (前苇沟).

Cost: 300 yuan per three hours, 800 yuan per villa
Tel: 8432 7808